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BY

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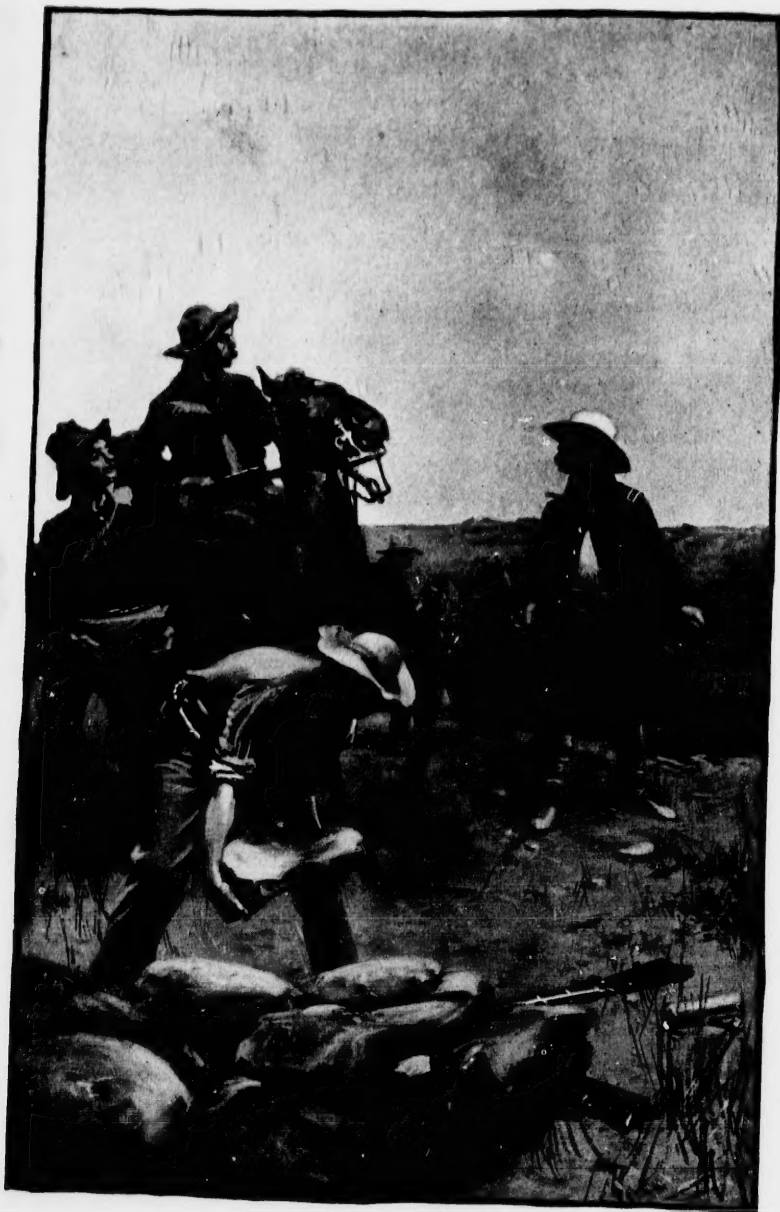
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"Two soldiers."

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LIPPINCOTT'S MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

MARCH, 1890.

TWO SOLDIERS.

I.

THE rain was plashing dismally on the grimy window-sill and over the awning of the shops below. The street-cars went jingling by with a dripping load of outside passengers on both platforms. Wagons and drays, cabs and closed carriages, that rattled or rumbled along the ordinarily busy thoroughfare, looked as though they had been dipped in the river before being turned loose on the street, and their Jehus, a bedraggled lot, must needs have had something amphibious in their composition, else they could not have borne up against the deluge that had been soaking the city for two days past. The policeman, waddling aimlessly about at the opposite corner, enveloped in rubber cap and overcoat, cast occasional wistful glances into the bar-room across the way, wherein the gas was burning in deference to the general gloom that overhung the neighborhood, and such pedestrians as had to be abroad hurried along under their umbrellas as though they half expected to have to swim before they could reach their destination. The dense cloud of sooty smoke that had overhung the metropolis for weeks past, and that wind from any direction could never entirely dissipate, for the simple reason that smoke-stacks by the score shot up in the outskirts on every side, now seemed to be hurled upon the roofs and walls, the windows and the pavement, in a black, pasty, carboniferous deposit, and every object out of doors that one could touch would leave its inky response upon the hand. A more depressing "spell of weather" had not been known for a year, and every living being in sight seemed saturated with the general gloom,—every living being except one: Captain Fred Lane, of the Eleventh Cavalry, was sitting at the dingy window of his office in the recruiting rendezvous on Sycamore Street and actually whistling softly to himself in supreme contentment.

Two missives had reached him that ghastly morning that had served to make him impervious to wind or weather. One—large, formal, impressive, and bearing the stamp of the War Department in heavy type across its upper corner—had borne to him the notification of his promotion to the rank of Captain (Troop D) Eleventh Cavalry, *vice* Curran, retired. The other—a tiny billet—had given him even greater happiness. It might be hard to say how many times he had read and re-read it since he found it on the snowy cloth of his particular breakfast-table in his particular corner of the snug refectory of "The Queen City," on the books of which most respectable if somewhat venerable club his name had been borne among the list of Army or Navy Members ever since his "graduation-leave," fifteen years before.

All his boyhood, up to the time of his winning his cadetship at West Point, had been spent in the city where for the past sixteen months he had considered himself fortunate in being stationed on recruiting-service. During the second year of his term at the Academy he was startled by the receipt of a sad letter from his mother, telling him briefly that his father, long one of the best-known among the business-men of the city, had been compelled to make an assignment. What was worse, he had utterly broken down under the strain, and would probably never be himself again. Proud, sensitive, and honorable, Mr. Lane had insisted on paying to the uttermost farthing of his means. Even the old homestead went, and the broken-hearted man retired with his faithful wife to a humble roof in the suburbs. There, a few months afterwards, he breathed his last, and there, during Fred's graduating year, she followed him. When the boy entered on his career in the army he was practically alone in the world. Out of the wreck of his father's fortune there came to him a little sum that started him in the service free from debt and that served as a nest-egg to attract future accumulations. This he had promptly banked until some good and safe investment should present itself, and, once with his regiment on the frontier, Mr. Lane had found his pay ample for all his needs.

It is unnecessary to recount the history of his fifteen years' service as a subaltern. Suffice it to say that, steering clear of most of the temptations to which young officers were subjected, he had won a reputation as a capital "duty-officer," that was accented here and there by some brilliant and dashing exploits in the numerous Indian campaigns through which the Eleventh had passed with no small credit. Lane was never one of the jovial souls of the regiment. His mood was rather taciturn and contemplative. He read a good deal, and spent many days in the saddle exploring the country in the neighborhood of his post and in hunting and fishing.

But, from the colonel down, there was not a man in the Eleventh who did not thoroughly respect and like him. Among the ladies, however, there were one or two who never lost an opportunity of giving the lieutenant a feline and not ineffective clawing when his name came up for discussion in the feminine conclaves occasionally held in the regiment. Sometimes, too, when opportunity served, he was made the victim of some sharp or sarcastic speech that was not always easy to bear in silence. Mrs. Judson, wife of the captain of B Troop, was reputed to

be "down on Lane," and the men had no difficulty whatever in locating the time when her change of heart took place.

The truth of the matter was that, thanks to simple habits and to his sense of economy, Lane had quite a snug little balance in the bank, and the ladies of the regiment believed it to be bigger than it really was; and, having approved the furnishing and fitting up of his quarters, the next thing, of course, that they essayed to do was to provide him with a wife. There the trouble began. Simultaneously with the arrival of his first bar as a first lieutenant there came from the distant East Mrs. Judson's younger sister "Emmy" and Mrs. Loring's pretty niece Pansy Fletcher. Lane was prompt to call on both, to take the young ladies driving or riding, to be attentive and courteous in every way; but, while he did thus "perceive a divided duty," what was Mrs. Loring's horror on discovering that pretty Pansy had fallen rapturously in love with "Jerry" Lattimore, as handsome, reckless, and impecunious a young dragoon as ever lived, and nothing but prompt measures prevented their marriage! Miss Fletcher was suddenly re-transported to the East, whither Jerry was too hard up to follow; and then, in bitterness of heart, Mrs. Loring blamed poor Fred for the whole transaction. "Why had he held aloof and allowed that—that scamp—that ne'er-do-weel—to cut in and win that innocent child's heart, as he certainly did do?" Against Lattimore the vials of her wrath were emptied *coram publico*, but against Lane she could not talk so openly.

Mrs. Judson had beheld the sudden departure of Miss Pansy with an equanimity she could barely disguise. Indeed, there were not lacking good Christians in the garrison who pointed significantly to the fact that she had almost too hospitably opened her doors to Miss Fletcher and her lover during that brief but volcanic romance. Certain it is, however, that it was in her house and in a certain little nook off the sitting-room that their long, delicious meetings occurred almost daily, the lady of the house being busy about the dining-room, the kitchen, or the chambers overhead, and Emmy, who was a good girl, but densely uninteresting, strumming on the piano or yawning over a book at the front window.

"What Mr. Lane needs is a gentle, modest, domestic little woman who will make his home a restful, peaceful refuge always," said Mrs. Judson; and, inferentially, Emmy was the gentle and modest creature who was destined so to bless him. The invitations to tea, the lures by which he was induced to become Emmy's escort to all the hops and dances, redoubled themselves after Miss Fletcher's departure; but it was all in vain. Without feeling any particular affinity for Mr. Lane, Emmy stood ready to say "Yes" whenever he should ask; but weeks went on, he never seemed to draw nearer the subject, and just as Mrs. Judson had determined to resort to heroic measures and point out that his attentions to Emmy had excited the remark of the entire garrison, and that the poor child herself was looking wan and strange, there was a stage-robbery not twenty miles from the post. Lane, with fifteen troopers, was sent in pursuit of the desperadoes, and captured them, after a sharp fight, ninety miles up the

river and near the little infantry cantonment at the Indian reservation; and thither the lieutenant was carried with a bullet through his thigh. By the time he was well enough to ride, the regiment was again in the field on Indian campaign, and for six months he never saw Fort Curtis again. When he did, Emmy had gone home, and Mrs. Judson's politeness was something awful.

Lane was out with the Eleventh again in three more sharp and severe campaigns, received an ugly bullet-wound through the left shoulder in the memorable chase after Chief Joseph, was quartermaster of his regiment a year after that episode, then adjutant, and finally was given the recruiting-detail as he neared the top of the list of first lieutenants, and, for the first time in fifteen years, found himself once more among the friends of his youth,—and still a bachelor.

Securing pleasant quarters in the adjoining street, Mr. Lane speedily made himself known at the club to which he had been paying his moderate annual dues without having seen anything of it but its bills for years past, yet never knowing just when he might want to drop in. Then he proceeded, after office hours, to hunt up old chums, and in the course of the first week after his arrival he had found almost all of them. Bailey, who sat next him in school, was now a prominent and prosperous lawyer. Terry, who sat just behind him and occasionally inserted crooked pins in a convenient crack in his chair, was thriving in the iron business. Warden had made a fortune "on 'Change," and was one of the leading brokers and commission-merchants of the metropolis. He had always liked Warden: they lived close together, and used to walk to and from school with each other almost every day. Mr. Lane had started on his quest with a feeling akin to enthusiasm. Calm and reticent and retiring as he generally was, he felt a glow of delight at the prospect of once more meeting "the old crowd;" but that evening he returned to his rooms with a distinct sense of disappointment. Bailey had jumped up and shaken hands with much effusion of manner, and had "my-dear-fellow"-ed him for a minute or two, and then, "Now, where are you stopping? I'll be round to look you up the very first evening I can get away, and —of course we'll have you at the house;" but Lane clearly saw he was eager to get back to his desk, and so took his leave. Terry did not know him at all until he began to laugh, and then he blandly inquired what he'd been doing with himself all these years. But the man who rasped him from top to toe was Warden. Business hours were over, and their meeting occurred at the club. Two minutes after they had shaken hands, Warden was standing with his back to the log fire, his thumbs in the arm-holes of his waistcoat, tilting on his toes, his head well back, and most affably and distinctly patronizing him.

"Well, Fred, you're still in the army, are you?" he asked.

"Still in the army, Warden."

"Well, what on earth do you find to do with yourself out there? How do you manage to kill time?"

"Time never hung heavily on my hands. It often happened that there wasn't half enough for all we had to do."

"You don't tell me! Why, I supposed that about all you did was to drink and play poker."

"Not an unusual idea, I find, Warden, but a very unjust one."

"Oh, yes, I know, of course, you have some Indian-fighting to do once in a while; but that probably amounts to very little. I mean when you're in permanent camp or garrison. I should think a man of your temperament would just stagnate in such a life. I wonder you hadn't resigned years ago and come here and made a name for yourself."

"The life has been rather more brisk than you imagine," he answered, with a quiet smile, "and I have grown very fond of my profession. But you speak of making a name for myself. Now, in what would that have consisted?"

"Oh, well, of course, if you really like the army and living in a desert and that sort of thing, I've nothing to say," said Warden; "but it always struck me as such a—such a—well, Fred, such a wasted life, all very well for fellows who hadn't brains or energy enough to achieve success in the real battle of life" (and here Warden was "swelling visibly"), "but not at all the thing for a man of your ability. We all conceded at school that you were head and shoulders above the rest of us. We were talking of it some years ago here in this very room: there'd been something about you in the papers,—some general or other had mentioned you in a report. Let's see: didn't you get wounded, or something, chasing some Indians?" Lane replied that he believed that "something like that had happened," but begged his friend to go on; and Warden proceeded to further expound his views:

"Now, you might have resigned years ago, taken hold of your father's old business, and made a fortune. There's been a perfect boom in railroad iron and every other kind of iron since that panic of '73. Look at Terry: he is roiling in money,—one of our most substantial men; and you know he was a mere drone at school. Why, Fred, if your father could have held on six months longer he'd have been the richest man in town to-day. It always seemed to me that he made such a mistake in not getting his friends to help him tide things over."

"You probably are not aware," was the reply, "that he went to friend after friend,—so called,—and that it was their failure or refusal to help that broke him down. The most active man in pushing him to the wall, I am told, was Terry's father, who had formerly been his chief clerk."

"Well," answered Warden, in some little confusion, for this and other matters in connection with the failure of Samuel Lane & Co., years before, were now suddenly recalled to mind, "that's probably true. Business is business, you know, and those were tough times in the money market. Still, you could have come back here when you left West Point, and built up that concern again, and been a big man to-day,—had your own establishment here, married some rich girl—you're not married, are you?"

Lane shook his head.

"On the other hand, then, you've been fooling away all this time in the army, and what have you got to show for it?"

"Nothing—to speak of," was the half-whimsical, half-serious answer.

"Well, there! Now don't you see? That's just what I'm driving at. You've thrown away your opportunities.—All right, Strong: I'll be with you in a minute," he called to a man who was signalling to him from the stairway. "Come in and see us, Fred. Come and dine with us,—any day. We're always ready for friends who drop in. I want you to meet Mrs. Warden and see my house. Now excuse me, will you? I have to take a hand at whist." And so away went Warden, leaving Lane to walk homeward and think over the experiences of the day.

He had "made a name for himself" that was well known from the Yellowstone to the Colorado. Thrice had that name been sent to the President with the recommendation of his department commander for brevets for conspicuous and gallant conduct in action against hostile Indians. The Pacific coast had made him welcome. Busy San Francisco had found time to read the *Alta's* and the *Chronicle's* correspondence from the scene of hostilities, and cordially shook hands with the young officer who had been so prominent in more than one campaign. Santa Fé and San Antonio, Denver, Cheyenne, and Miles City, were points where he could not go without meeting "troops of friends." It was only when he got back to his old home in the East that the lieutenant found his name associated only with his father's failure, and that his years of honorable service conveyed no interest to the friends of his youth. "Money makes the mare go," said Mr. Warden, in a subsequent conversation; and money, it seems, was what he meant in telling Lane he should have come home and "made a name for himself."

Lane had been on duty a year in the city when a rumor began to circulate, to the effect that investments of his in mining stocks had brought him large returns, and men at the club and matronly women at the few parties he attended began asking significant questions which now it pleased him to parry rather than answer directly. His twelve months' experiences in society had developed in him a somewhat sardonic vein of humor and made him, if anything, more reticent than before. And then—then all of a sudden there came over the spirit of his dream a marked and wondrous change. He no longer declined invitations to balls, parties, or dinners when he knew that certain persons were to be present. Mabel Vincent had just returned from a year's tour abroad, and Lieutenant Fred Lane had fallen in love at first sight.

It was a note from her that made even that dingy old office, on this most dismal of days, fairly glow and shine with a radiance of hope, with a halo of joy and gladness such as his lonely life had never known before. The very first time he ever saw himself addressed as Captain Fred Lane, Eleventh Cavalry, was in her dainty hand. He turned his chair to the window to read once again the precious words; but there entered, dripping, a Western Union messenger with a telegram. Tearing it open, Lane read these words: "All join in congratulations on your promotion and in wonderment at the colonel's selection of your successor. Noel is named."

Lane gave a long whistle of amazement. "Of all men in the regiment!" he exclaimed. "Who would have thought of Gordon Noel?"

II.

The colonel of the Eleventh Cavalry was a gentleman who had some peculiarities of temperament and disposition. This fact is not cited as a thing at all unusual, for the unbiassed testimony of the subalterns and even the troop commanders of every cavalry regiment in service would go far towards establishing the fact that all colonels of cavalry are similarly afflicted. One of the salient peculiarities of the commanding officer of the Eleventh was a conviction that nothing went smoothly in the regiment unless the captains were all on duty with their companies; for, while at any time Colonel Riggs would approve an application for a lieutenant's leave of absence, it was worse than pulling teeth to get him to do likewise for a gentleman with the double bars on his shoulder. "Confound the man!" growled Captain Greene, "here I've been seven years with my troop, saving up for a six months' leave, and the old rip disapproves it! What on earth can a fellow say?"

"You didn't go about it right, Greeney," was the calm rejoinder of a comrade who had been similarly "cut" the year previous. "You should have laid siege to him through Madame a month or so. What she says as to who goes on leave and who doesn't is law at head-quarters, and I know it. Now, you watch Noel. That fellow is wiser in his generation than all the rest of us put together. It isn't six months since he got back from his staff detail, and you see how constant he is in his attentions to the old lady. Now, I'll bet you anything you like the next plum that tumbles into the regiment will go to his maw and nobody else's."

"Riggs wouldn't have the face to give anything to Noel,—in the way of detached duty, I mean. I heard him say when 'Gordy' was coming back to the regiment that he wished he had the power to transfer subs from troop to troop: he'd put Noel with the most exacting captain he knew and see if he couldn't get a little square service out of the fellow."

"That's all right, Greene. That's what he said six months ago, before Noel was really back, and before he had begun doing the devoted to her ladyship at head-quarters. Riggs wouldn't say so now, —much less do it. She wouldn't let him, comrade mine; and you know it."

"Noel has been doing first-rate since he got back, Jim," said Captain Greene, after a pause.

"Oh, Noel's no bad soldier in garrison,—at drill or parade. It's field-work and scouting that knocks him endwise; and if there's an Indian within a hundred miles— Well, you know as much as I do on that subject."

Greene somewhat gloomily nodded assent, and his companion, being wound up for the day, plunged ahead with his remarks:

"Now, I'm just putting this and that together, Greene, and I'll make you a bet. Riggs has managed things ever since he has been colonel so that a lieutenant is ordered detached for recruiting-service and never a captain. It won't be long before Lane gets his promotion;

and I'll bet you that even before he gets it Riggs will have his letter skimming to Washington begging his immediate recall and nominating a sub to take his place. I'll give you odds on that; and I'll bet you even that the sub he names will be Gordy Noel."

But, though he scouted the idea, Greene would not bet, for at that instant the club-room was invaded by a rush of young officers just returning from target-practice, and the jolliest laugh, the most all-pervading voice, the cheeriest personality, of the lot were those of the gentleman whose name Captain Jim Rawlins had just spoken.

"What you going to have, fellows?" he called. "Here, Billy, old man, put up that spelter: I steered the gang in here, and it's my treat. *Don't go, Forbes; come back, old fellow, and join us.* Captain, what shall it be? Say, you all know Dick Cassidy of the Seventh? I heard such a good rig on him this morning. I got a letter from Tommy Craig, who's on duty at the War Department, and he told me that Dick was there trying to get one of these blasted college details. What d'ye suppose a cavalryman wants to leave his regiment for, to take a thing like that?"

"Perhaps his health is impaired, Noel," said Wharton, with a humorous twinkle in his handsome eyes. "Even cavalrymen have been known to have to quit their beloved profession on that account and get something soft in the East for a year or so."

The color mounted to Noel's cheeks, but he gave no other sign of understanding the shaft as aimed at him. Promptly and loudly as ever he spoke out:

"Oh, of course, if he's used up in service and has to go in to recuperate, all well and good; but I always supposed Cassidy was a stalwart in point of health and constitution. Who's going to the doctor's to-night?—you, Jack?"

Jack—otherwise Lieutenant John Tracy—shook his head as he whiffed at the cigarette he had just lighted and then stretched forth his hand for the foaming glass of beer which the attendant brought him, but vouchsafed no verbal reply. Lee and Martin edged over to where the two captains were playing their inevitable game of seven-up. Two of the juniors,—young second lieutenants,—despite the extreme cordiality of Noel's invitation, begged to be excused, as they did not care to drink anything,—even a lemonade; and no sooner had the party finished their modest potation than there was a general move. Wallace and Hearn went in to the billiard-room; Wharton and Lee started in the direction of their quarters; and presently Mr. Noel was the only man in the club-room without an occupation of some kind or a comrade to talk to.

Now, why should this have been the case? Noel's whole manner was overflowing with jollity and kindness; his eyes beamed and sparkled as he looked from one man to the other; he hailed each in turn by his Christian name and in tones of most cordial friendship; he chatted and laughed and had comical anecdotes to tell the party; he was a tall, stylish, fine-looking fellow, with expressive dark eyes and wavy dark-brown hair; his moustache was the secret envy of more than half his associates; his figure was really elegant in its grace

and suppleness; his uniforms fitted him like a glove, and were invariably of Hatfield's choicest handiwork. Appearances were with him in every sense of the word; and yet there was some reason why his society was politely but positively shunned by several of his brother officers and "cultivated" by none.

It was only a few years after the great war when Gordon Noel joined the Eleventh from civil life. He came of an old and influential family, and was welcomed in the regiment as an acquisition. He made friends rapidly, and was for two or three years as popular a youngster as there was in the service. Then the troop to which he was attached was ordered to the Plains, *via* Leavenworth. It was a long journey by boat, and by the time they reached the old frontier city orders and telegrams were awaiting them, one of which, apparently to Mr. Noel's great surprise, detached him from his company and directed him to report for temporary duty at the War Department in the city of Washington. He was there eighteen months, during which time his regiment had some sharp battles with the Cheyennes and Kiowas in Kansas and the Indian Territory. Then a new Secretary of War gave ear to the oft-repeated appeals of the colonel of the Eleventh to have Mr. Noel and one or two other detached gentlemen returned to duty with their respective companies, and just as they were moving to the Pacific coast the absentees reported for duty and went along. At Vancouver and Walla Walla Noel seemed to regain by his joviality and good-fellowship what he had lost in the year and a half of his absence, though there were out-and-out soldiers in the Eleventh who said that the man who would stay on "fancy duty" in Washington or anywhere else while his comrades were in the midst of a stirring campaign against hostile Indians couldn't be of the right sort.

Up in Oregon the Modoc troubles soon began, and several troops were sent southward from their stations, scouting. There were several little skirmishes between the various detachments and the agile Indians, with no great loss on either side; but when "Captain Jack" retired to the natural fastness of the lava-beds, serious work began, and here Mr. Noel was found to be too ill to take part in the campaign, and was sent in to San Francisco to recuperate. The short but bloody war was brought to a close without his having taken part in any of its actions, but he rejoined after a delightful convalescence in San Francisco (where it was understood that he had broken down only after riding night and day and all alone some three hundred miles through the wilderness with orders to a battalion of his regiment that was urgently needed at the front), and was able to talk very glibly of what had occurred down in the Klamath Lake country. Then came his promotion to a first-lieutenancy, and, as luck would have it, to a troop stationed at the Presidio. For three months he was the gayest of the gay, the life of parties of every kind both in town and in garrison; he was in exuberant health and spirits; he danced night after night, and was the most popular partner ever welcomed in the parlors of hospitable San Francisco. And then all of a sudden there came tidings of an outbreak among the Arizona Apaches of so formidable a character that the division commander decided to send his Presidio troops to

reinforce the one regiment that was trying to cover a whole Territory. There was pathetic parting, with no end of lamentation, when Mr. Noel was spirited away with his lynx-eyed captain; but they need not have worried,—those fair dames and damsels; not a hair of his handsome head was in danger, for the —th had grappled with and throttled their foes before the detachment from the Eleventh were fairly in the Territory, and the latter were soon ordered to return and to bring with them, as prisoners to be confined at Alcatraz, the leaders of the outbreak, who would be turned over to them by the —th. To hear Noel tell of these fierce captives afterwards was somewhat confusing, as, from his account, it would appear that they had been taken in hand-to-hand conflict by himself and a small detachment of his own troop; but these were stories told only to over-credulous friends.

The Eleventh came eastward across the Rockies in time to participate in the great campaign against the Sioux in '76, and was on the Yellowstone when Custer and his favorite companies were being wiped out of existence on the Little Horn. The news of that tragedy made many a heart sick, and Mr. Noel was so much affected that when his comrades started to make a night ride to the front to join what was left of the Seventh, he was left behind, ostensibly to sleep off a violent headache. He promised to ride after and catch them the next day, but, through some error, got aboard General Terry's steamer, the *Far West*, and made himself so useful looking after the wounded that the surgeon in charge was grateful, and, knowing nothing of his antecedents, gave him a certificate on which he based an application for leave on account of sickness, and went to Bismarck with the wounded, and thence to the distant East, where he thrilled clubs and dinner-tables with graphic accounts of the Custer battle and of how we got up just in time to save the remnant of the Seventh. The Eleventh fought all through the campaign of '76 and the chase after Chief Joseph in '77; but Noel was again on temporary duty at the War Department, and there he stayed until '78, by which time various officials had become acquainted with some of the facts in the case. The Eleventh "cold-shouldered" him for a while after he got back; but they happened to be now in a region where there were no "hostiles," and where hops, Germans, theatricals, tableaux, and entertainments of all kinds were the rage. No other man could be half so useful to the ladies as Gordon Noel. He had just come from Washington, and knew *everything*; and when *they* took him up and made much of him 'twas no use for the men to stand aloof; they had to take him up too. Lane was adjutant of the regiment at this time; and he, having seen every report and letter with reference to Mr. Noel that had been filed in the office, would hardly speak to him at all except when on duty, and this feeling was intensified when, a year or so later, they were suddenly hurried to Arizona on account of a wild dash of the Chiricahuas, and as the different companies took the field and hastened in the pursuit Mr. Noel was afflicted with a rheumatic fever of such alarming character that the youthful "contract" surgeon who had accompanied his troop held him back at the railway and speedily sent him East on a three months' sick-leave, which family influence soon made six. And this was about the record and reputation that

Mr. Noel had succeeded in making when Captain Rawlins was ready to bet Captain Greene that, despite it all, the regimental Adonis would get the recruiting-detail, *vice* Lane, for everybody knew Fred Lane so well as to prophesy that he would apply to be relieved and ordered to rejoin his regiment, and everybody was eager to see him take hold of poor old Curran's troop, for if anybody could "straighten it out" Lane could.

The news that Noel was named by the colonel caused a sensation at regimental head-quarters which the Eleventh will probably not soon forget. "Old Riggs" had become the commander of the regiment after it seemed that the Indian wars were over and done with, and, thanks to our peculiar system of promotion, was now at the head of an organization with which he had never served as subaltern, captain, or junior field-officer. Discipline forbade saying anything to his face,—for which the colonel was devoutly thankful,—but everybody said to everybody else that it was all Mrs. Riggs's doing, a fact which the colonel very well knew.

So did Noel, though he rushed into the club-room apparently overwhelmed with amazement and delight:

"I supposed of *course* it would be Follansbee. I never dreamed he would give it to me. Come up, crowd! come up everybody! It's champagne to-day," he jovially shouted; and there were men who could not bear to snub him openly. Nothing had really ever been proved against him: why should they judge him? But there were several who declined, alleging one excuse or another, and even those who drank with him did so while applauding Wharton's toast:

"Well, Noel, here's to you!" It ought to have been Follansbee; but I wish you the joy of it."

III.

Never before had Fred Lane known the sensation of being reluctant to rejoin his regiment. When the colonel wrote a personal letter to him some eight or ten weeks previous, telling him that Curran would almost surely get the next vacancy on the retired list and that he would expect his old adjutant to come back to them at once and restore efficiency and discipline to Troop D, Mr. Lane replied with the utmost readiness; but this was before Mabel Vincent came into his life and changed its whole current. How much and how devotedly he loved her, Lane himself never realized until the day his promotion reached him, and with it the news that his successor was already designated. He knew that within the week he might expect orders from the War Department to join his troop at Fort Graham as soon as he had turned over his funds and property to the officer designated to relieve him; he knew Noel so well as to feel assured that he would not wait for the arrival of formal orders, but, if the colonel would permit, would start the instant he received telegraphic notification from Washington that "Old Riggs's" nomination had been approved. "This is Wednesday," he mused; "and by a week from to-day I can count on his being here; and in ten days I must go."

There was a large party that night, and, fully a week before, he had asked that he might have the honor of being Miss Vincent's escort. It was with great disappointment that he received her answer, which was spoken, however, in a tone of such sorrow that poor Lane felt that the barbs, at least, of the arrow had been removed.

"I don't know how to tell you how I regret having to say 'No,' Mr. Lane," she said, and there was a tremor in her voice and a little quiver at the corners of her pretty mouth. "I have almost felt confident that you were going to ask me,—is that a very bold thing to say?—for you have been so—so kind to me since our first meeting, and indeed I wanted in some way to let you know that there were other arrangements already made. But how could I say anything? Mr. Rossiter, the eldest son of father's former partner, comes to pay us a visit of four or five days before he goes abroad again. And he is a great friend of the Chiltons, and, being our guest, he goes with me. Indeed, I'm *very* sorry, Mr. Lane, if you are disappointed."

Fred, of course, begged that she should give herself no uneasiness. There was no other girl whom he had thought of taking. Mr. Rossiter was very much to be envied, and he would like to call and pay his respects to that gentleman when he arrived. "By all means do," said Miss Vincent; and, if not asking too much, would Mr. Lane get him a card at the club? Brother Rex was away, or she wouldn't trouble him. But Lane was delighted to be troubled. Anything she asked—any service he could render her—he flew with untold eagerness to accomplish; and, though properly jealous of the coming man, —this Mr. Rossiter, of whom he had never before heard mention,—he was eager to meet and entertain him. The gentleman was to arrive on Monday, and Lane spent a delightful evening at the Vincents', wondering why he hadn't come. Tuesday would surely bring him, or an explanation, said Miss Mabel; and on Tuesday Lane was prompt to call, and glad to spend another long evening at the hospitable old homestead, and stoutly did he hold his ground through three successive relays of visitors, encouraged to do so by a certain look in his lady's bright eyes that spoke volumes to his throbbing heart, and that very next morning at the club he found her dainty missive on his breakfast-table. How early she must have risen to write it!—and to have seen the announcement of his promotion in the Washington despatches! True, he remembered that it was frequently her pleasure to be up betimes to give her father his coffee; for Vincent *père* was a business-man of the old school, who liked to begin early in the day. Of course he had seen the name in the Washington news and had read the paragraph to her: that was the way to account for it. But her note was a joy to him in its sweet, half-shy, half-confidential wording. She merely wrote to say that Mr. Rossiter had wired that he would be detained in New York until the end of the week; and now, if Captain Lane had *really* made no engagement, she would be glad indeed if he cared to renew the invitation which with such regret she was compelled a week ago to decline. Lane totally forgot his breakfast in his haste to rush to the writing-room and send her a reply.

All "The Queen City" had been quick to see or hear of his "sudden

before, he had Vincent's escort. answer, which poor Lane felt

to say 'No,' and a little more felt comfortable thing to meeting, and there were other things? Mr. Lane to pay us a And he is goes with me.

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his "sudden

smite" and consequent devotion to Mabel Vincent, and great was the speculation as to the probable result.

"How can she encourage him as she does? What can she see in that solemn prig?" indignantly demanded Miss Fanny Holton, who had shown a marked interest in Mr. Lane during his first six months in society and had danced with him all through the season. "He is one of the forlornest, stupidest men I ever knew,—utterly unlike what I supposed a cavalry officer to be."

"And yet, Fanny dear, you were very much taken up with him the first winter,—last year, I mean," was the reply of her most devoted and intimate friend.

"What an outrageous fib! I wasn't; and if I was, it was because I wanted to draw him out,—do *something* to enliven him. Of course I danced with him a great deal. There isn't a better dancer in town, and you know it, Maud: you've said so yourself time and again."

"Well, you didn't draw him out,—nor on. But the moment he sees Mabel Vincent he falls heels over head in love with her. Why, I never saw a man whose every look and word so utterly 'gave him away,'" was Miss Maud's characteristic and slangy reply. "And it's my belief she'll take him, too. She likes him well, and she says he knows more than any other man she has ever met."

"He has money, too, and can resign and live here if she wants him to," went on Miss Maud, after a pause which, oddly enough, her friend had not taken advantage of.

"You don't know anything about what Mabel Vincent will or won't do, Maud. I've known her years longer than you have, and, though I'm awfully fond of her, and wouldn't have this repeated for the world,—and you must swear never to repeat it to anybody,—I know her so well that I can say she doesn't know her own mind now and would change it in less than six months if she did. She is as fickle in love as in her friendships; and you can't have forgotten how inseparable you and she were for three months at Madame Hoffman's, and then how she fastened on Katherine Ward. I don't care a snap of my finger whom Mr. Lane chooses to fall in love with, but if it's Mabel Vincent he'd better insist on a short engagement and stand guard over her with his sword in the mean time. It's 'out of sight out of mind' with her, and has been ever since she was four years old."

And so in the smoking-room at the club and in the feminine cliques and coteries in society the probability of Mabel Vincent's accepting Lieutenant Lane was a matter of frequent discussion. But of all this chit-chat and speculation Captain Lane stood in profound ignorance as he entered his dark office that drenching Wednesday morning with her precious note in his waistcoat-pocket. He neither knew nor cared what old Vincent was worth: all he wanted was Mabel's own sweet self, for he loved her with his whole heart and soul, with all the strength and devotion of his deep and loyal nature. He could hardly control his voice so as to speak in the conventional official tone to the sergeant in charge as the latter saluted him at the door-way and made the customary report of the presence of the detachment. Lane stepped into his little dressing-room and quickly appeared in his

neat fatigue uniform. There wasn't a ghost of a chance of would-be recruits wandering in that day; but he was a stickler for discipline. He required his men to be always in their appropriate uniform, and never neglected wearing his own while in the office; yet in all the Queen City no one but his little party, the applicants for enlistment, and the few citizens who came in on business had ever seen him except in civilian dress.

"These reports and returns all go in to-morrow, I believe?" said Lane to his sergeant.

"They do, sir."

"Well, will you take them in to the clerk again," said Lane, blushing vividly, "and tell him to alter that 'First Lieutenant' to 'Captain' wherever it occurs? The—official notification is just here," he added, almost apologetically.

"Sure I'm glad to hear it, sir. All the men will be glad, sir; and I'm proud to think that I was the first man to salute the captain to-day," was the sergeant's delighted answer. "I'll call Taintor in at once."

But Lane was blissfully thinking of the little note, now transferred to the breast-pocket of his uniform blouse, and of how not his honest old sergeant but sweet Mabel Vincent was the first to hail him by his new title; and in thinking of the note and of her he failed to notice that, so far from coming at once, it was fully ten or fifteen minutes before Taintor, the clerk, put in an appearance, and when he did that his face was ashen-gray and his hand shook as though with palsy.

"The sergeant will tell you what is to be done with the papers, Taintor," said Lane, conscious that he was blushing again, and consequently striving to appear engrossed in the morning paper. The man picked them up one after another and without a word; he dropped one to the floor in his nervousness, but made a quick dive for it, and then for the door, as though fearful of detention. He hurried through the room in which the sergeant and one or two men were seated, and, reaching his big desk at a rear window, where he was out of sight, dropped the papers on the floor and buried his face in his shaking hands.

A few minutes later the sergeant, coming into the little cubby-hole of a room in which Taintor had preferred to do his work, found him with his arms on the desk and his face hidden in them, and the soldier clerk was quivering and twitching from head to foot.

"What's the matter with you, Taintor?" growled the old soldier. "Didn't you promise me you'd quit drinking?"

The face that looked up into his was ghastly.

"It isn't drink, sergeant," moaned the man. "At least, I haven't exceeded for a month. I've got a chill,—an ague of some kind. Just let me run down to the drug-store and get some quinine,—with perhaps a little brandy. Then I can do this work. Do, sergeant. I won't abuse your kindness."

"Well, go, then," was the reluctant answer; "but get back quick. And only one drink, mind you."

Taintor seized his cap and fairly tottered through the adjoining room to the stairway, down which he plunged madly, and, heedless of the pelting rain, darted across the street to the gas-lighted bar-room.

"By G—d," muttered the veteran sergeant, "there's something worse than either whiskey or ague back of this; and I could swear to it."

IV.

Captain Lane, as has been said, allowed until the following Wednesday for the arrival of his regimental comrade Mr. Noel. He was not a little surprised, however, on the following Tuesday morning, as he sat at breakfast at the club, glancing over the morning paper, to come upon the following announcement:

"DISTINGUISHED ARRIVAL.

"Our readers will be interested in knowing that Captain Gordon Noel, of the Eleventh U.S. Cavalry, has been ordered on duty in the city, in charge of the cavalry rendezvous on Sycamore Street. Captain Noel comes to us with a reputation that should win instant recognition and the heartiest welcome from the Queen City. For nearly fifteen years he has served with his gallant regiment, and has been prominent in every one of the stirring campaigns against the hostile Indians of our Western frontier. He has fought almost every savage tribe on the continent; was disabled in the Modoc campaign in '73, commanded the advance-guard of his regiment that reached the scene of the Custer massacre only just in time to rescue the remnant of the regiment from a similar fate, and for his services on that campaign was awarded the compliment of staff duty in the city of Washington. At his own request, however, he was relieved from this, and rejoined his regiment when hostilities were threatened in Arizona two years ago. And now, as a reward for gallant and distinguished conduct in the field, he is given the prized recruiting-detail. Captain Noel is the guest of his cousin, the Hon. Amos Withers, at his palatial home on the Heights; and our fair readers will be interested in knowing that he is a bachelor, and, despite his years of hardship, danger, and privation, is a remarkably fine-looking man.

"It is understood that Lieutenant Lane, the present recruiting officer, has been ordered to return to his regiment at once, although the time has not yet expired."

In the expression on Captain Lane's face as he finished this item there was something half vexed, half comical.

A few hours afterwards, while he was seated in his office, the orderly entered, and announced two gentlemen to see the captain. Lane turned to receive his visitors, but before he could advance across the dark room the taller of the two entering the door made a spring towards him, clapped him cordially on the back, and, with the utmost delight, shouted, "How are you, old fellow? How well you're looking! Why, I haven't set eyes on you since we were out on the field hunting up old Geronimo's trail! By Jove! but I'm glad to see you!" And Lane had no difficulty in recognizing at once his regimental comrade Gordon Noel.

"Let me present you to my cousin, Mr. Withers," said Noel.

And a stout, florid man, whom Lane had often seen at the club, but to whom he had never hitherto been made known, bowed with much cordiality and extended his hand.

"I didn't know," said he, "that you were a friend of Noel's, or I'd have come to see you before, and invited you to my house."

"Friend?" exclaimed Noel. "*Friend!* Why, we've been partners and chums! Why, we've been all over this continent together, Withers! Fred, do you remember the time we were up on the Sioux campaign?—the night I went over with those fellows to hunt up the trail to the Custer ground? Let's see, you were acting adjutant then, if I recollect right. Oh, yes; you were back with the colonel."

Lane received his guests with perfect courtesy, but without that overweening cordiality which distinguished the other's manner, and then Mr. Withers entered into the conversation. Turning to Captain Lane, he said,—

"I didn't know that you had been on the Sioux campaign. Were you there too?"

Lane replied quietly that he had been with his regiment through that year,—in fact, had never been away from it for any length of time, except on this detail which had brought him to his old home.

"Oh, yes; I remember having heard that this was your home. I am very sorry indeed that you did not make yourself known to me before," said Mr. Withers. "You know that I am a very busy man and don't get around much. Now you can come and dine with us this evening, can you not? Mrs. Withers will certainly expect you, now that Noel is here."

"I am very sorry indeed, Mr. Withers, but I am already engaged."

"You must make early bids if you want to get this young man, Amos," put in Mr. Noel, affectionately patting Lane on the shoulder. "It was just so in the regiment. He was always in demand.—Well, when can you come, Fred? What evening shall we say?"

"It will depend, perhaps, on the day I turn over the property to you. How soon do you wish to take hold?"

"Oh, any time. Any day. Whenever you're ready."

"I'm ready now, to-day, if you choose," was Lane's prompt response. "I fancied you might be here by to-morrow."

"Yes, you bet I didn't let the grass grow under my feet. The moment we got the telegraphic notification that the colonel's nomination was approved, I lit out for the railroad," said Noel, laughing gleefully.

"And when will you come in and take over the property? There's a good deal of clothing to be couriered. As for the funds, they, of course, are all in the bank."

"Suit yourself about that, Freddy, old boy. I'm going down street with Amos now. How'll to-morrow morning do?"

"Very well indeed. You will find me here any time you come in."

"All right. Now get out of your yellow stripes and come along down town with us. The carriage is right here at the door. We're going over to see the works,—Mr. Withers's foundries, you know. Come."

"Yes, come with us. I think I have heard it was your father who—ah—who was in the same line of business at one time, Mr. Lane," said Mr. Withers.

"Captain Lane, Amos!—Captain Lane! Great Scott! you mustn't 'mister' a man who has been through the years of service he has."

"I beg pardon. I did not so understand you, Gordon, when we were talking last night with the—when we were having our smoke and chat after dinner.—You will come with us, won't you, captain?"

"I wish I could, Mr. Withers, but my office-hours have to be observed, and I cannot leave in the morning. Thank you heartily none the less.—Then you will be here to-morrow, Noel?"

"To-morrow be it, Fred: so *au revoir*, if you can't join us. I mustn't keep Withers waiting,—business-man, you know. God bless you, old fellow, you don't begin to realize how delighted I am to see you! So long."

"But about dining with us, Captain——"

"Oh, Lord, yes!" burst in Noel. "What evening, now? I'd almost forgotten. Getting in among bricks and mortar addles my head. 'Tisn't like being out in the saddle with the mountain breezes all around you: hey, Fred? Gad! I don't know whether I can stand this sort of thing, after our years of campaigning." And the lieutenant looked dubiously around upon the dark and dingy walls and windows.

"Suppose we say Thursday evening, captain," suggested Mr. Withers; "and I'll have just a few friends to meet you two army gentlemen."

"I shall be very happy, Mr. Withers."

"Good! That's the talk, Fred!" heartily shouted the lieutenant, bringing his hand down with a resounding whack between Lane's shoulder-blades. "Now we are off! Come along, Amos." And the cousins disappeared down the dark stairway and popped into the carriage.

"Not a very demonstrative man, your friend the captain, but seems to be solid," was Mr. Withers's remark.

"Oh, yes. He is about as solid as they make them," answered Noel, airily. "Lane has his faults, like most men. It is only those who really know him, who have been associated with him for years, and whom he trusts and likes, that are his friends. Now, I'd go through fire and water for him, and he would for me,—but of course you wouldn't think it, to see his perfectly conventional society manner this morning. If I had left you down at the foot of the stairs and had stolen up on tiptoe and gone over and put my arms round his neck, you would probably have found us hugging each other and dancing about that room like a couple of grizzly bears when you came up, and the moment he caught sight of you he would have blushed crimson and got behind his ice-screen in a second. You just ought to have seen him the night we met each other with our detachments down near Guadalupe Cañon when we were hunting Geronimo. Some d—d fool of a ranchman had met him and said I was killed in the little affair we had with the Apache rear-guard. Why, I was perfectly amazed at the emotion

he showed. Ever since then I've sworn by Fred Lane; though, of course, he has traits that I wish he could get rid of."

"Good officer, isn't he?"

"Ye—es, Lane isn't half a bad soldier. Of course it remains to be seen what sort of captain he will make. He has only just got his troop."

"But I mean he—well—is a brave man,—has shown up well in these Indian fights you were telling us about?"

"H'm!" answered Noel, with a quiet little chuckle: "if he wasn't, you bet he wouldn't have been all these years in the Eleventh. A shirk of any kind is just the one thing we *won't* stand. Why, Amos, when old Jim Blazer was our colonel during those years of the Sioux and Cheyenne and Nez Percé wars he ran two men out of the regiment simply because they managed to get out of field duty two successive years. Oh, no! Lane's all right as a soldier, or he wouldn't be wearing the crossed sabres of the Eleventh."

Mr. Withers listened to these tales of the doings and sayings of the regiment with great interest. "Lane might have been here a dozen years," said he to himself, "and no one in our community would have known anything at all about the dangers and hardships his comrades and he had encountered in their frontier service. It's only when some fellow like Noel comes to us that we learn anything whatever of our army and its doings."

He took his cousin to the great moulding-works of which he was the sole head and proprietor, and presented his foremen and his clerks to the captain, and told them of his career in the Indian wars on the frontier, and then up on 'Change and proudly introduced "my cousin Captain Noel" to the magnates of the Queen City; and, though not one out of a dozen was in the least degree interested in "the captain" or cared a grain of wheat what the army had done or was doing on the frontier, almost every man had time to stop and shake hands cordially with the handsome officer, for Amos Withers was said to be a man whose check for a round million would be paid at sight, and anybody who was first-cousin to that amount of "spot cash" was worth stopping to chat with, even in the midst of the liveliest *casé* 'twixt bull and bear on the floor of the Chamber of Commerce. A tall, gray-haired gentleman, with a slight stoop to his shoulders and rather tired, anxious eyes, who listened nervously to the shouts from "the pit" and scanned eagerly the little telegraphic slips thrust into his hand by scurrying messenger-boys, was introduced as Mr. Vincent, and Mr. Vincent regarded if Noel knew Lieutenant—or rather Captain—Lane.

"Know Fred Lane? He is the best friend I have in the world," was the enthusiastic answer, "and one of the best men that ever lived."

Ah! I'm glad to know you,—glad to know what you say. The captain is a constant visitor at our house, a great friend of ours, in fact. Ah! excuse me a moment." And Mr. Vincent seized a certain well-known broker by the arm and murmured some eager inquiries in his ear, to which the other listened with ill-disguised impatience.

Withers and, of course, "the captain" were the centre of a cordial—not to say obsequious—group so long as they remained upon the floor, and the secretary presently came to them with the compliments

of the president and a card admitting Captain Gordon Noel to the floor of the Chamber at any time during business hours, which that officer most gracefully acknowledged and then went on replying to the questions of his new friends about the strange regions through which he had scouted and fought, and the characteristics of the Indian tribes with whom he had been brought in contact. And by the time Cousin Amos declared they must go up to the club for luncheon, everybody was much impressed by the hearty, jovial manner of the dashing cavalryman, and there were repeated hand-shakes, promises to call, and prophecies of a delightful sojourn in their midst as he took his leave.

"Has Captain Lane come in yet to lunch?" inquired Mr. Withers of the liveried attendant at "The Queen City," as his cousin inscribed his name and regiment in the visitors' book, as introduced by "A. W.," in ponderous strokes of the pen.

"No, sir. It's considerably past the time the gentleman generally comes. I don't think he'll be in to-day, sir."

"Then we won't wait, Gordon. We'll order for two. What wine do you like?"

* * * * *

Over at the dingy recruiting-office Captain Lane had forgotten about luncheon. There were evidences of carelessness on the part of the clerk who had made out his great batch of papers, and the further he looked the more he found. The orderly had been sent for Taintor, and had returned with the information that he was not at his desk. Sergeant Burns, when called upon to explain how it happened that he allowed him to slip away, promptly replied that it was half-past eleven when he came out of the captain's office and said that the captain would want him all the afternoon, so he had best go and get his dinner now. Half-past twelve came, and he did not return. The sergeant went after him, and came back in fifteen minutes with a worried look about his face to say that Taintor had not been to dinner at all, and that the door of the little room he occupied was locked. He had not been in the house since eight that morning.

"I'm afraid, sir, he's drinkin' again," said Burns; "but he's so sly about it I never can tell until he is far gone."

"You go out yourself, and send two of the men, and make inquiries at all his customary haunts," ordered Lane. "I will stay here and go through all these papers. None are right, so far. He never failed me before; and I do not understand it at all."

But when night came Taintor was still missing,—had not been seen nor heard of,—and Captain Lane had written a hurried note to the lady of his love to say that a strange and most untoward case of desertion had just occurred which necessitated his spending some time with the Chief of Police at once. He begged her to make his excuses to her good mother for his inability to come to dinner. Later in the evening he hoped to see her.

"P.S.—Gordon Noel, who is to relieve me, has arrived. I have only three or four days more."

"Gordon Noel?" said Miss Vincent, pensively. "Where have I heard of Gordon Noel?"

V.

And now a matter has to be recorded which will go far to convince many of our readers that Captain Lane was even more of an old-fashioned prig than he has hitherto appeared to be. After leaving the Vincents' late on the previous day, he had come to his rooms, and sat there for fully two hours in the endeavor to compose a brief, manly letter addressed to Vincent *père*. It was nothing more nor less than the old style of addressing a gentleman of family and requesting permission to pay his addresses to his daughter Mabel. A very difficult task was the composition of this letter for our frontier soldier. He was desperately in earnest, however; time was short, and after several attempts the missive was completed. His first duty in the morning was to send that letter by an orderly to Mr. Vincent's office. Then he turned to his sergeant and asked for news of the deserter. Not a word had been heard,—not a single word.

"I have been everywhere I could think of, sir," said the sergeant, "and both the men have been around his customary haunts last night and this morning making inquiries, but all to no purpose. The detectives came and burst into his trunk, and there was nothing in it worth having. He had been taking away his clothing, etc., from time to time in small packages and secreting them we don't where. One thing I heard, sir, that I never knew before, and that was that after he had gone to bed at night he would frequently steal out of his room and go away and never reappear until breakfast-time in the morning. And now will the lieutenant—the captain pardon me for asking the question, Are the check-books all right, sir?"

"What put that idea into your head?" asked Lane.

"Well, sir, some of the men tell me that he was always writing at his desk, and once Strauss said that he had picked up a scrap of paper that he hadn't completely destroyed, and the handwriting on it didn't look like Taintor's at all; he said it more resembled that of the captain; and it made me suspicious. I never heard this until late last night."

A sudden thought occurred to Lane. Taking out his check-book, he carefully counted the checks remaining and compared them with the number of stubs, and found, to his surprise and much to his dismay, that at least five or six checks were missing.

"Send for a cab at once. I must go down to the bank. You stay here, and when Lieutenant Noel comes, give him my compliments, and ask him to sit down and wait awhile and read the morning paper. I'll be back in a very short time."

Following the custom established by his predecessor, Captain Lane had always kept the recruiting-funds in the First National Bank. His own private funds he preferred to keep in an entirely different establishment,—the Merchants' Exchange.

The cab whirled him rapidly to the building indicated, and, although it lacked half an hour of the time of opening, he made his way into the office and asked to see the paying teller.

"Will you kindly tell me if any checks on the recruiting-fund have lately been presented for payment?" he eagerly asked.

The captain was referred to the book-keeper, and that official called him within the railing.

"No less than four checks were brought here yesterday for payment, and they came between half-past two and three o'clock in the afternoon," was the book-keeper's report. "There seemed to us something wrong in the simultaneous presentation of the four, and I was on the point of addressing a note to you this morning to ask you to come down to the bank. Everything about it appears in proper shape and form, except that three of the checks have been endorsed payable to your clerk, William Taintor, who came in person and drew the money."

"Let me see the checks, if you please," said the captain.

They were speedily produced. Lane took them to the window and closely examined them.

"I could not tell them," he said, "from my own handwriting; and yet those three checks are forgeries. I believe that the endorsements on the back are equally forgeries. Now, can I take these with me to the office of the Chief of Police? or do you desire that the detectives should be sent here? Taintor deserted last night, and all traces have been lost. What is the amount that he has drawn?"

"One check, payable to the order of William Hayden for board furnished to the recruiting-party, is to the amount of forty-five dollars and fifty cents. The second, payable to James Freeman, and endorsed by him to William Taintor, as was the first, is for rent of the building occupied by the recruiting rendezvous, precisely similar in form and amount to the previous checks, for the sum of sixty dollars. The third check is payable to William Taintor himself, marked 'for extra-duty pay as clerk at the recruiting office for the past six months.' The fourth is made payable to the order of Sergeant James Burns, 'extra-duty pay as non-commissioned officer in charge of the party for the six months beginning January 1 and ending June 30.'"

This check, too, had been endorsed payable to the order of William Taintor. All four checks, amounting in all to the sum of about one hundred and sixty dollars, had been paid to the deserting clerk during the afternoon of the previous day.

"Had you no suspicion of anything wrong?" said Lane.

"I knew nothing about it," said the book-keeper. "They were presented to the paying teller at the desk, and it was not until after bank was closed, when we came to balance up cash, that the matter excited comment and then suspicion. Taintor has frequently come here before with drafts and checks; and if you remember, sir, on one or two occasions he has been sent for new check-books when the old ones had run out."

"That's very true," said Lane. "He has been employed here in this rendezvous for the last ten years, and has borne, up to within my knowledge of him, an unimpeachable character. If any more checks come in, stop payment on them until you see me, and, if possible, detain the person who presents them."

Half an hour afterwards the captain was back in his office, and there, true to his appointment, was Lieutenant Noel.

"I have had a strange and unpleasant experience, Noel," said Lane. "Most of my papers have been faultily made out. My clerk deserted last night and has turned out to be a most expert forger. He has stolen half a dozen checks from my book, made them out to the order of various parties, forged the endorsements himself, got the money yesterday afternoon, and cleared out, no one knows where."

"Great Scott, old man! that is hard luck! How much has he let you in for?" asked Noel, in the slang of the period.

"Only a hundred and sixty dollars, fortunately; and I have made that good this morning,—placed my own check to the credit of the recruiting-fund in the First National Bank, so that in turning over the funds to you there will be no loss. We have to make new papers for the clothing account; but as quickly as possible I will have them ready for your signature and mine."

"There is no hurry whatever, old fellow," answered Noel, cheerily. "I've come back from the regiment a little short of money, and I want to have a nest-egg in the bank to begin with. It's a good thing to have a fat cousin, isn't it? He has always been very liberal and kind to me, and, luckily, I've only drawn on him twice. So I'll hurry along."

Five minutes after Noel left, a district messenger entered with a note for Captain Lane. It was addressed to him in the handwriting of Mr. Vincent. He opened it with a trembling hand. It contained merely these words:

"I am obliged to leave for New York this afternoon. Can you come to my office at one o'clock? We can then talk without interruption; and I much desire to see you.

"T. L. V."

As the big bell on the city hall had struck one, Captain Lane appeared at the office of Vincent, Clark & Co., and was shown without delay into the private room of the senior partner. Mr. Vincent, looking even older and grayer in the wan light at the rear of the massive building, was seated at his desk and busily occupied with a book of memoranda and figures. He pushed back his chair and came forward at once at sight of Lane, and motioned to the clerk to retire. The cavalryman's heart was beating harder than he had any recollection of its ever doing before, except in her presence, and he felt that his knees were trembling. But the old gentleman's greeting gave him instant hope:

"I am glad you have come, my dear sir: I am glad to know a man who has been taught as I was taught. Young people nowadays seem to rush into matrimony without the faintest reference to their parents, and your letter was a surprise to me,—a surprise, that is, in the fact that you should have sought my permission at all.

"Take this chair, captain," he continued, as he returned to his desk. "I have much to say to you," he added, with a sigh. "Let me say at once that from what I know and have heard of you there is no man

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of my acquaintance to whom I could intrust my daughter's future with more implicit confidence. It is true that both her mother and I had at one time other hopes and views for her, and that we wish your profession was not that of arms. And now I beg you to be patient with me, and to pardon my alluding to matters which you yourself broach in this—this most manifold letter. You tell me that you are not dependent on your pay alone, but that from investments in real estate in growing cities in the West and in mines in New Mexico your present income is some five thousand dollars. As I understand you, the property is steadily increasing in value?"

"It has steadily increased thus far, sir, and I think it will continue to do so for several years to come,—in the real estate investments at least."

"I am glad of this, on your account as well as hers, for Mabel has been reared in comparative luxury. She has never known what it was to want anything very much or very long. She has been educated on the supposition that her whole life would be one equally free from care or stint; and if I were to die to-morrow, sir, she would be a beggar."

And here, in great agitation, the old gentleman rose from his chair and began nervously pacing up and down the little room, wringing his white, tremulous hands, and turning his face away from the silent soldier, that he might not see the tears that hung to the lashes, or the piteous quivering of the sensitive lips. For a moment or two nothing more was said. Then, as though in surprise, Mr. Vincent stopped short.

"Did you understand me, Captain Lane? I do not exaggerate the situation in the least. I do not know how soon the axe will fall. We are safe for to-day, but know not what the morrow may bring forth. I may be met *en route* by telegrams saying that the journey is useless,—that we are ruined,—and the money I hope to get in New York to tide us over would come only too late. Next month at this time the house in which Mabel was born and reared may be sold over her head, with every scrap and atom of its furniture, and we be driven into exile. Do you realize this, sir? Do you understand that if you win her affection and she become your wife I have not a penny with which to bless her?"

"Mr. Vincent," answered Lane, "I would hold myself richer than any man in this world if I could know that your daughter cared for me and would be my wife. Do not think that I fail to sympathize and feel for you and all who are dear to you in your distress and anxiety, but I am almost glad to hear that she is not the heiress people said she was. It is Mabel I want,"—and here his voice trembled almost as much as the old man's, and his honest gray eyes filled up with tears he could not down,—“and with her for my own I could ask nothing of any man. I have your consent to see her, then, at once if need be? You know I am relieved from duty here and must rejoin my regiment within ten days."

"My full consent, and my best wishes, captain," said Mr. Vincent, grasping the outstretched hand in both his own. "You have not spoken to her at all?"

"Not a word, Mr. Vincent; and I can form no idea what her answer will be. Pardon me, sir, but has she or has Mrs. Vincent any knowledge of your business troubles?"

"My wife knows, of course, that everything is going wrong and that I am desperately harassed; Mabel, too, knows that I have lost much money—very much—in the last two years; but neither of them knows the real truth,—that even my life-insurance is gone. A year ago I strove to obtain additional amounts in the three companies in which I had taken out policies years ago. Of course a rigid examination had to be made by the medical advisers, and the result was the total rejection of my applications, and in two cases an offer to return with interest all the premiums hitherto paid. The physicians had all discovered serious trouble with my heart. Last winter our business was at its lowest ebb. I had been fortunate in some speculations on 'Change in the past, and I strove to restore our failing fortunes in that way. My margins were swept away like chaff, and I have been vainly striving to regain them for the last three months, until now the last cent that I could raise is waiting the result of this week's deal. Every man in all the great markets East and West knew three weeks ago that a powerful and wealthy syndicate had 'cornered,' as we say, all the wheat to be had, and was forcing the price up day by day; and I had started in on the wrong side. Even if the corner were to break to-morrow I could not recover half my losses. The offer the insurance companies made was eagerly accepted, sir: I took their money, and it dribbled away through my broker's fingers. If wheat goes up one cent, we cannot meet our obligations,—we are gone. We have been compelled to borrow at ruinous rates in order to meet our calls: I say we, for poor Clark is with me in the deal, and it means ruin for him too, though he, luckily, has neither wife nor child. Are you ready, sir, to ally your name with that of a ruined and broken man,—to wed a beggar's daughter?" And here poor old Vincent fairly broke down and sobbed aloud. Long watching, sleepless nights, suspense, wretched anxiety, the averted looks and whispered comments of the men he daily met on 'Change, the increasing brusqueness and insolence of his broker, Warden,—all had combined to humiliate and crush him. He threw himself upon the sofa, his worn old frame shaking and quivering with grief. The sight was too much for Lane. This was *her* father: it was her home that was threatened, her name that was in jeopardy.

"Mr. Vincent," he cried, almost imploringly, "I cannot tell you how utterly my sympathy is with you in your anxiety and distress. I beg you not to give way,—not to abandon hope. I—I think it may be in my power to help a little; only—it must be a secret between us. She—Mabel must never know."

VI.

In the three days that followed, the transfer of funds and property at the recruiting rendezvous took place, and Mr. Noel stepped in, *vice* Lane, relieved and ordered to join his regiment. The former was having a delightful time. A guest of the wealthy Witherses could not

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long be a stranger within their gates to the Queen citizens, and every afternoon and evening found him enjoying hospitalities of the most cordial character. At the club he had already become hail-fellow with all the younger element and had made himself decidedly popular among the elders, and every man who had not met that jolly Captain Noel was eager to be presented to him. He was ready for pool, billiards, bowling, or a drink the moment he got within the stately door-way; and, as he sang, whistled, laughed, chatted, and cracked innumerable jokes during the various games, was a capital mimic, and could personate Pat, Hans, or Crapaud with telling effect, his presence was pronounced by every one as better than a solid week of sunshine,—something the Queen City rarely, if ever, experienced.

Poor Lane, on the contrary, was nearly worrying his heart out. He had gone to the Vincents' the very evening on which he had seen the father of the family off for New York, and had nerved himself to put his fortune to the test,—to tell her of his deep and devoted love and to ask her to be his wife. That she well knew he loved her, without being told, he felt sure must be the case; but, beyond a belief that she liked and trusted him, the captain had not the faintest idea as to the nature of her feelings towards him. He was a modest fellow, as has been said. His glass told him that, despite a pair of clear gray eyes and a decidedly soldierly cut to his features, he was not what women called a handsome man; and, what was more, there were little strands of gray just beginning to show about his broad forehead and in the heavy moustache that shaded his mouth. Lane sighed as he remembered that he was in his thirty-sixth year. How *could* she care for him,—fifteen years her senior? Lane rang the door-bell that night and felt once more that his heart was beating even as it did at one o'clock when he was ushered into the awful presence of her father.

"Miss Vincent has not left her room to-day, and is not well enough to come down to-night, sir," said the servant who came to the door, "and Mrs. Vincent begged to be excused because of Miss Mabel's needing her."

"I—I am very, very sorry," stammered the captain. "Please say that Mr. Lane called" (they had known him so well for two months as *Mr.* Lane that he could not yet refer to himself by his new title), "and—and would call again to-morrow, hoping to hear Miss Vincent was much better."

And then, dejected and miserable, and yet with something akin to the feeling one experiences when going to a dentist's to have a tooth drawn and the dreaded wielder of the forceps proves to be away, Lane retreated down the broad stone steps until he reached the walk, gazed up at the dim light in the window which he thought might be hers, anathematized himself for his lack of self-possession in not having asked whether there wasn't something he could bring her,—something she would like,—for the simple-hearted fellow would have tramped all night all over town to find and fetch it,—and then a happy thought occurred to him: "Women always love flowers." He ran to the next street, boarded a west-bound car, and was soon far down town at his favorite florist's.

"Give me a big box of cut flowers,—the handsomest you have," he said; and while they were being prepared he wrote a few lines on a card, tore it up, tried again on another, and similarly reduced that to fragments, and finally, though far from content, limited the expression of his emotions to the simple words,—

"Do get well by Saturday at latest. I cannot go without seeing you.
F. L."

"Where shall we send them, sir?" asked the florist, as he came forward with the box in his hand.

"Never mind: I'll take it myself," was the answer, as the captain popped in the little missive.

And when he got back to the house the light was still burning in the window in the second story, and the doctor had just left, said the sympathetic Abigail, and had said that it was nothing serious or alarming: Miss Mabel would have to keep quiet a day or two; that was all.

But what hard luck for poor Lane, when the days of his stay were so very few! All Thursday morning was spent at the rendezvous, counting over property and comparing papers with Noel. Then, while that gentleman went to the club for luncheon the captain hastened to the Vincents' door to renew inquiries, and was measurably comforted by the news that Miss Mabel was much better, though still confined to her room. Would he not come in? Mrs. Vincent was out, but she thought—did that most intelligent young woman, Mary Ann—that perhaps there was a message for him. Like Mr. Toots, poor Lane, in his anxiety to put no one to any trouble, came within an ace of stammering, "It's of no consequence," but checked himself in time, and stepped into the bright parlor in which he had spent so many delicious hours listening to her soft rich voice as she sang, or as she chatted blithely with him and her frequent guests. It was some time before Mary Ann returned. Evidently, there was a message, for the girl's face was dimpled with smiles as she handed him a little note. "Miss Mabel says please excuse pencil, sir; she had to write lying down. Miss Holton has just gone away, after spending most of the morning."

Excuse pencil! Lane could hardly wait to read the precious lines. How he longed to give the girl a five-dollar bill! but this wasn't England, and he did not know how Mary Ann would regard such a proffer. She promptly and discreetly retired, leaving the front door open for his exit, and the sweet June sunshine and the soft warm breath of early summer flowing in through the broad vestibule.

"How good you are to me!" she wrote. "The flowers were—and are still—exquisite. I shall be down-stairs a little while to-morrow afternoon, if the doctor is good to me as you are. Then I can thank you, can I not?
M. L. V."

The hours dragged until Friday afternoon came. He had to go to the Witherses' to dinner on Thursday evening, and a dreary, ostentatious, ponderous feast it was. Noel, in his full-dress uniform, was the hero of the hour. He greeted Lane a trifle nervously.

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"I meant to have telephoned and begged you to bear me out, old man," said he, "but this thing was sprung on me after I got home. Cousin Mattie simply ordered me to appear in my war-paint, and I had to do it. You are to go in to dinner with her, by the way; and I wish you were *en grande tenue* instead of civilian spike-tail. Here's Amos."

And Amos marched him around to one guest after another,—"self-made men, sir,"—heavy manufacturers and money-makers, with their overdressed wives. Lane strove hard to be entertaining to his hostess, but that lady's mind was totally engrossed in the progress of the feast and dread of possible catastrophe to style or service. Her eyes glanced nervously from her husband to the butler and his assistants, and her lips perpetually framed inaudible instructions or warnings, and so it happened that the captain was enabled to chat a good deal with a slight, dark-eyed, and decidedly intelligent girl who sat to his right and who was totally ignored by the young cub who took her in,—the eldest son of the house of Withers, a callow youth of twenty.

"You did not hear my name, I know," she had said to him. "I am Miss Marshall, a very distant connection of Mrs. Withers's, the teacher of her younger children, and the merest kind of an accident at this table. Miss Faulkner was compelled to send her excuses at the last moment, and so I was detailed—isn't that your soldier expression?—to fill the gap."

"And where did you learn our army expressions, may I ask?" said Lane, smilingly.

"I had a cousin in the artillery some years ago, and visited his wife when they were stationed at the old barracks across the river. There's no one there now, I believe. Listen to Captain Noel: he is telling about Indian campaigns."

Indeed, pretty much everybody was listening already, for Noel, with much animation, was recounting the experiences of the chase after the Chiricahua chieftain Geronimo. He was an excellent talker, and most diplomatic and skilful in the avoidance of any direct reference to himself as the hero of the series of dramatic incidents which he so graphically told, and yet the impression conveyed—and intended to be conveyed—was that no man had seen more, endured more, or ridden harder, faster, and farther, than the narrator. Flattered by the evident interest shown by those about him, and noting that conversation was brisk at Lane's end of the table, the lieutenant soon lost himself in the enthusiasm of his own descriptions, and was only suddenly recalled to earth by noting that now the whole table had ceased its dinner-chat, and that, with the possible exception of the hostess, who was telegraphing signals to the butler, every man and woman present was looking at him and listening. The color leaped to his face, and he turned towards Lane with a nervous laugh.

"I'd no idea I was monopolizing the talk," he said. "Fred, old man, wasn't it G Troop that tried to get across the range from your command to ours when we neared the Guadalupe? Amos and Mr. Hawks had been asking me about the chase after Geronimo."

"Yes; it was G Troop,—Captain Greene's," answered Lane.

"You know that Captain Lane and I are of the same regiment,

and, though not actually together in the chase, we were in the same campaign," said Noel, apologetically, and then, quickly changing the subject, "By the way, Mr. Hawks, is Harry Hawks of the artillery a relative of yours?"

"A nephew, captain,—my brother Henry's son. Did you know him?"

"Know him? Why, he is one of the warmest friends I have in the whole army,—outside of my own regiment, that is. We were constantly together one winter when I was on staff duty in Washington, and whenever he could get leave to run up from the barracks he made my quarters his home. If you ever write to him just ask him if he knows Gordon Noel."

"Do you know, Captain Lane, that I have found your comrade captain a very interesting man?" observed Miss Marshall; and her eyes turned upon her next-door neighbor in calm but keen scrutiny.

"Noel is *very* entertaining," was the reply; and the dark-gray eyes looked unflinchingly into the challenge of the dark-brown.

"Yes, I have listened to his tales of the frontier, at breakfast, dinner, and during the evening hours, since Sunday last. They are full of vivacity and variety."

"One sees a good deal of strange country and many strange people in the course of ten or a dozen years' service in the cavalry."

"And must needs have a good memory to be able to tell of it all,—especially when one recounts the same incident more than once." And Miss Marshall's lips were twitching at the corners in a manner suggestive of mischief and merriment combined.

Lane "paused for a reply." Here was evidently a most observant young woman.

"There! I did not mean to tax your loyalty to a regimental comrade, captain: so you need not answer. Captain Noel interests and entertains me principally because of his intense individuality and his entire conviction that he carries his listeners with him. 'Age cannot wither nor custom stale his infinite variety;' but there should not be quite so much variety in his descriptions of a single event. This is the fourth time I have heard him tell of the night-ride from Carrizo's Ranch to Cañon Diablo."

"You have the advantage of me, Miss Marshall," answered Lane, his eyes twinkling with appreciation of her demure but droll exposure of Noel's weak point. "It is the first time I ever heard his version of it."

"It is the last time he will mention it in your presence, if he saw the expression in your face, Captain Lane."

"Do those introspective eyes of yours look clear through and see out of the back of your head, Miss Marshall? Your face was turned towards him. You stopped short in telling me of your cousin in the artillery and your visit to the barracks, and bade me listen to something I did not care half as much to hear as your own impressions of garrison-life. Never mind the quadruplex account of the night-ride. Tell me what you thought of the army."

"Well, of course the first thing a girl wants to know is what the

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shoulder-straps mean; and I learned the very first day that the blank strap meant a second lieutenant, a single silver bar a first lieutenant, and two bars a captain,—that is, in the artillery. Now, why this provoking distinction in the cavalry? Here's a captain with only one bar, a captain whose letters from the War Department come addressed to *Lieutenant Gordon Noel!*"

"Noel never speaks of himself as captain, I'm sure," said Lane.

"Neither do you; and for a year past, ever since I have known you by sight,"—and here a quick blush mounted to her temples,—"you occasionally came to our church, you know," she hastened to explain,—"you have been referred to as Lieutenant Lane or Mr. Lane; but we know you are a captain now, for we saw the promotion recorded in the Washington despatches a fortnight ago. What was the date of Captain Noel's elevation to that grade? I confess I took him for your junior in the service and in years too."

"Yes, Noel holds well on to his youth," answered Lane, smilingly.

"And about the captaincy?"

"Well, he is so very near it, and it is so apt to come any day, that perhaps he thinks it just as well to let people get accustomed to calling him *that*. Ther he won't have to break them all in when the commission *does* come."

"Then he is your junior, of course?"

"Only by a file or so. He entered service very soon after me."

"But was not in your class at West Point?"

"No: he was not in my class."

"In the next one, then, I presume?"

"Miss Marshall, is your first name Portia? I should hate to be a witness whom you had the privilege of cross-examining. There are ladies 'learned in the law,' and I expect to read of you as called to the bar within a year or two."

"Never mind, Captain Lane. I will ask you nothing more about him."

"No, Miss Marshall, I presume that my clumsiness has rendered it totally unnecessary."

That night, as the guests were dispersing, Lane did what most of them entirely omitted: he went over to the piano and bade Miss Marshall good-night.

"Captain Lane," she said, "I beg your pardon if I have been too inquisitive and too critical, as I know I have been; but you have taught me that you know how to guard a comrade's failings from the world. Will you not forgive a woman's weakness?"

"There is nothing to forgive, Miss Marshall. I hope sincerely that we may meet again before I go back to the regiment."

And later, as Lane was walking homeward from a final peep at the dim light in a certain window, he had time to think how intolerable that dinner would have seemed had it not been for the accident which placed that dark-eyed governess by his side.

VII.

Lane was awake with the sun on Friday morning, and lay for a few moments listening to the twittering of the sparrows about his window-sills, and watching the slanting, rosy-red shafts of light that streamed through the intervals in the Venetian blinds. "Does it augur bright fortune? Does it mean victory? Is it like the 'sun of Austerlitz'?" were the questions that crowded through his brain. To-day—to-day she was to "be down for a little while in the afternoon," and then she "hoped to be able to thank him. Could she?" Ten thousand times over and over again she could, if she would but whisper one little word—Yes—in answer to his eager question. It lacked hours yet until that longed-for afternoon could come. It was not five o'clock; but more sleep was out of the question, and lying there in bed intolerable. Much to the surprise of his darky valet, Lane had had his bath, dressed, and disappeared by the time the former came to rouse him.

Noel was late in reaching the rendezvous. It was after ten when he appeared, explaining that Mrs. Withers was far from well, and therefore Cousin Amos would not leave the house until the doctor had seen her and made his report. Lane received his explanation somewhat coldly, and suggested that they go right to work with their papers, as he had important engagements. It was high noon when they finished the matters in hand, and then the captain hastened to the club, and was handed a telegram with the information that it had only just come. It was evidently expected. Lane quickly read it and carefully stowed it away in an inside pocket. In another moment he was speeding down town, and by half-past twelve was closeted with the junior partner of the tottering house of Vincent, Clark & Co. Mr. Clark was pale and nervous; every click of the "ticker" seemed to make him start. A clerk stood at the instrument, watching the rapidly-dotted quotations.

"Have you heard from Mr. Vincent?" was the first question; and, without a word, a telegram was handed him. It was in cipher, as he saw at once, and Clark supplied the transcription:

"Rossiter refuses. Watch market closely. See Warden instant touches half. Break predicted here."

"Twenty minutes more!" groaned Clark, as he buried his face in his hands. "Twenty minutes more of this awful suspense?"

"What was the last report?" asked Lane, in a low voice.

"Ninety-eight and a quarter. My God! Think of it! Three-quarters of a cent between us and beggary! I could bear it, but not Vincent: 'twould kill him. Even his home is mortgaged."

There came a quick, sharp tap at the glazed door: the clerk's head was thrust in:

"Three-eighths, sir."

"It's time to move, then," said Lane. "I cannot follow you to the floor,—I have no ticket; but I will be awaiting your call at the Merchants' Exchange. Mr. Vincent has told you— Better have it in Treasury notes,—one hundred each,—had you not?"

"I'll see Warden at once. D—n him! he would sell us out with no more compunctions than he would shoot a hawk."

"You infer that Mr. Vincent has had no success in raising money in New York?" asked Lane, as they hurried from the office.

"Not an atom! He made old Rossiter what he is,—hailed him out of the depths, set him on his feet, took him in here with him for ten years, sent him East with a fortune that he has trebled since in Wall Street, and now, by heaven! the cold-blooded brute will not lend him a pitiful twenty thousand."

At the bank Lane found an unusual number of men, and there was an air of suppressed excitement. Telegraph-boys would rush in every now and then with despatches for various parties, and these were eagerly opened and read. Scraps of low, earnest conversation reached him as he stood, a silent watcher. "They cannot stand it another day." "They've been raining wheat on them from every corner of the North and West. No gang can stand up under it." "It's bound to break," etc. To an official of the bank who knew him well he showed the telegram he had received at the club, and the gentleman looked up in surprise:

"Do you want this *now*, captain? Surely you are not——"

"No, I'm *not*, most emphatically," replied Lane, with a quiet laugh. "Yet I may have sudden use for that sum. I telegraphed to my agents at Cheyenne yesterday. You, perhaps, ought to wire at once and verify it."

"Those are our bank rules, and I presume it will be done; though of course we know——"

"Never mind. I much prefer you should, and at once." And, leaving the man of business to attend to the necessary formality, Lane strolled to a window and looked down the crowded street towards the massive building in which the desperate grapple 'twixt bull and bear was at its height. The day was hot; men rushed by, mopping their fevered brows; a throng of people had gathered near the broad entrance to the Chamber, and all its windows were lowered to secure free and fresh currents of air. Lane fancied he could hear the shouts of the combatants in the pit even above the ceaseless roar and rattle of wheels upon the stone pavement. Little by little the minute-hand was stealing to the vertical, and still no sign from Clark. "Has she touched a half yet?" he heard one man eagerly ask another as they dived into the broker's office underneath.

"Not yet; but I'm betting she does inside of five minutes and reaches ninety-nine first thing to-morrow."

At last, boom went the great bell,—a single, solemn stroke. There was a rush of men for the street, a general scurry towards the great Board of Trade building, a rapidly-increasing crowd along the curb-stones as the members came pouring out, and brokers and their customers hurried away towards numberless little offices all over the neighborhood. Dozens of them passed along under his post of observation, some flushed, some deathly pale, and finally Clark himself appeared, and Lane hastened forth to meet him.

"Saved by a mere squeak so far," was the almost breathless whisper

as Clark removed his hat and wiped his clammy forehead. "But we know not what a day may bring forth. It's a mere respite."

"Can the syndicate carry any more weight, think you? Prices jumped up two and three weeks ago. Now they only climb a hair's-breadth at a time. I hear they are loaded down,—that it *must* break; but I'm no expert in these matters."

"If you were, you'd be wise to keep out of it. Who can say whether they will break or not? It is what everybody confidently predicted when eighty-nine was touched twelve days ago; and look at it!"

"Do you go back to the office from here? Good! I'll join you there in ten minutes," said Lane, "for I shall not come down town this afternoon, and may not be able to in the morning."

And when Captain Lane appeared at the office of Vincent, Clark & Co. he brought with him a stout little packet, which, after the exchange of a few words and a scrap or two of paper, Mr. Clark carefully stowed in the innermost compartment of the big safe. Then he grasped Lane's hand in both of his, as the captain said good-by.

That afternoon, quite late, the captain rang at the Vincents' door, and it was almost instantly opened by the smiling Abigail whom he so longed to reward for her evident sympathy the day before, yet lacked the courage to proffer a greenback. Lane was indeed little versed in the ways of the world, howsoever well he might be informed in his profession.

"Miss Vincent is in the library, sir, if you will please to walk that way," was her brief communication; and the captain, trembling despite his best efforts to control himself, stepped past her into the broad hall, and there, hurrying down the stairway, came Mrs. Vincent, evidently to meet him. Silently she held forth her hand and led him into the parlor, and then he saw that her face was very sad and pale and that her eyes were red with weeping.

"I will only detain you a moment, captain," she murmured, "but I felt that I must see you. Mr. Vincent wrote to me on the train as he left here, and he tells me you know—the worst."

"Mr. Vincent has honored me with his confidence, dear lady; and I—saw Mr. Clark to-day."

She looked up eagerly: "What news had he from New York? Did he tell you?—about Mr. Rossiter, that is? I knew perfectly well what Mr. Vincent's hopes and expectations were in going."

"There was a telegram. I fear that he was disappointed in Mr. Rossiter; but the money was not needed up to the closing of the board at one o'clock."

"I am not disappointed. I thank God that the Rossiters refused him money. It will open his eyes to their real characters,—father and son. I would rather go and live in a hovel than be under obligations to either of them." And now the tears were raining down her cheeks.

"Do not grieve so, Mrs. Vincent," said Lane. "I cannot believe the danger is so great. I have listened to the opinions of the strongest men on 'Change this afternoon. A 'break' in this corner was pre-

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"Yes, but it may be days away yet, and Mr. Vincent has confessed to me that his whole fortune hangs by a single hair,—that this wretched speculation has swallowed everything,—that a rise of a single penny means beggary to us, for he can no longer answer his broker's calls."

"That may have been so when he wrote; but Mr. Clark seems to have had a little better luck locally. I infer from what he told me that they were safe for to-day and could meet the raise of that critical cent or two: so that, despite the great loss they have sustained, there is not the certainty of ruin that so overwhelmed Mr. Vincent on Wednesday."

"You give me hope and courage," cried the poor, anxious-hearted woman, as she seized and pressed his hand. "And—and you come to us in the midst of our troubles! Mr. Vincent was so touched by your writing first to him: it brought back old days, old times, old fashions, that he loved to recall,—days when he, too, was young and brave and full of hope and cheer."

"And I have your good wishes, too, Mrs. Vincent?—even though I am only a soldier and have so little to offer her beyond—beyond—"

But he could not finish. He had looked into her face with such eager hope and delight when he began, yet broke down helplessly when he tried to speak of his great love for her sweet daughter.

"I know what you would say," she answered, with quick and ready sympathy. "I have seen how dear my child has been to you almost from the very first. Indeed I *do* wish you happiness, Mr. Lane; but Mr. Vincent told you that—we once had other views for Mabel. It is only fair and right that you should know."

"How could it have been otherwise, Mrs. Vincent? Is there any man quite worthy of her? Is there any station in life too high for one like her? I never dared hope that your consent could have been so freely given. I do not dare hope that she can possibly care for me—yet."

"I will not keep you longer, then," said she, smiling through her tears. "I shall see you after a while, perhaps. Mabel is in the library. Now I'll leave you."

With tumultuously-throbbing heart, he softly entered and quickly glanced around. The tiers of almost priceless volumes, the antique furniture, the costly Persian rugs and portières, the pictures, bronzes, bric-à-brac,—all were valueless in his eager eyes. They sought one object alone, and found it in a deep bay-window across the room. There, leaning back in a great easy reading-chair, with a magazine in her lap, her fair head pillowed on a silken cushion, reclined the lady of his heart, smiling a sweet welcome to him, while the rosy color mounted to her brows as he came quickly forward and took her soft, white hand. How he was trembling! How his kind gray eyes were glowing! She could not meet them: she had to look away. She had begun some pleasant little welcoming speech, some half-laughing allusion to the flowers, but she stopped short in the midst of it. A knot

of half-faded roses—his roses—nestled in her bosom, contrasting with the pure white of her dainty gown; and now those treasured, envied flowers began to rise and fall, as though rocked on the billows of some clear lake stirred by sudden breeze. What he said, he did not know: she hardly heard, though her ears drank in every word. She only realized that both his hands were tightly clasping hers, and that, scorning to seek a chair and draw it to her side,—perhaps, too, because he could not bear to release even for an instant that slender little hand,—perhaps still more because of the old-time chivalry in his nature that had prompted him to ask parental sanction before telling her of his deep and tender love,—Captain Lane had dropped on one knee close beside, and, bending over her, was pouring forth in broken, incoherent words the old, old story of a lover's hopes and fears and longings,—the sweet old song that, day after day, year after year, ay, though sung since God's creation of the beautiful world we live in, never, never can be heard or sung except in rapture. Even though she be cold to him as stone, no true woman ever listened to the tale of a man's true love without a thrill at heart. Once, once only, in the lifetime of men like Lane—yes, and of men not half his peers in depth of character, in intensity of feeling—there comes a moment like this, and, whether it be in the glow and fervor and enthusiasm of youth or the intensity and strength of maturer years, it is the climax of a lifetime; it is the date from which all others, all scenes, trials, triumphs, take their due apportionment; it is the memory of all others that lingers to the very last, when all, all but this are banished from the dying brain. Rome, in her pride of place, made the building of her Capitol the climax of mundane history: everything in her calendar was "*ante urbem conditam*" or the reverse. The old world measured from the Flood; the new world—our world—measures from the birth of Him who died upon the cross; and the lifetime of the man who has once deeply and devotedly loved has found its climax in the thrilling moment of the avowal.

"Have you no word to say to me, Mabel?—not one word of hope?—not one?" he pleaded.

Then she turned her lovely face, looking into his deep eyes through a mist of tears.

"I do like you," she murmured; "I do honor you so, Captain Lane; but that is not what you deserve. There is no one, believe me, whom I so regard and esteem; but—I do not know—I am not certain of myself."

"Let me try to win your love, Mabel. Give me just that right. Indeed, indeed I have not dared to hope that so soon I could win even your trust and esteem. You make me so happy when you admit even that."

"It is so little to give, in return for what you have given me," she answered, softly, while her hand still lay firmly held in the clasp of his.

"Yet it is so much to me. Think, Mabel, in four days at most I must go back to my regiment. I ask no pledge or promise. Only let me write to you. Only write to me and let me strive to arouse at least a little love in your true heart. Then by and by—six months, perhaps,

—I'll come again and try my fate. I know that an old dragoon like me, with gray hairs sprouting in his moustache——"

But here she laid her fingers on his lips, and then, seizing both her hands, he bowed his head over them and kissed them passionately.

The day of parting came, all too soon. Duty—the mistress to whom he had never hitherto given undivided allegiance—called him to the distant West, and the last night of his stay found him bending over her in the same old window. He was to take a late train for St. Louis, and had said farewell to all but her. And now the moment had arrived. A glance at his watch had told him that he had but twenty minutes in which to reach the station.

She had risen, and was standing, a lovely picture of graceful womanhood, her eyes brimming with tears. Both her hands were now clasped in his; she could not deny him *that* at such a time; but—but was there not something throbbing in her heart that she longed to tell?

"It is good-by now," he murmured, his whole soul in his glowing eyes, his infinite love betrayed in those lips quivering under the heavy moustache.

She glanced up into his face.

"Fred,"—and then, as though abashed at her own boldness, the lovely head was bowed again almost on his breast.

"What is it, darling? Tell me," he whispered, eagerly, a wild, wild hope thrilling through his heart.

"Would it make you happier if—if I—told you that I knew myself a little better?"

"*Mabel!* Do you mean—do you care for me?"

And then she was suddenly clasped in his strong, yearning arms and strained to his breast. Long, long afterwards he used to lift that travelling-coat of gray tweeds from the trunk in which it was carefully stowed away, and wonder if—if it were indeed true that her throbbing heart had thrilled through that senseless fabric, stirring wild joy and rapture to the very depths of his own.

"Would I be sobbing my heart out," at last she murmured, "if I did not love you and could not bear to have you go?"

VIII.

"What an awfully pretty girl that Miss Vincent is, Amos!" said Mr. Noel one morning, as the cousins were quietly breakfasting together before going down town.

"Pretty? yes," said Amos, doubtfully. "But look here, my boy: recollect that you want to think of something more than 'pretty' in selecting a wife while you are in here on this detail. Now, Mrs. Withers and I have been keeping our eyes open, and our ears too, for that matter: the fact is, I always have both eyes and ears open,—travel with them that way, sleep with them that way. I would not be the man I am in the business world, Noel, if that weren't the case. And, pretty though Miss Vincent may be, she's not the girl for you to waste your time on."

"But why not?" asked Noel. "They have a magnificent home,

and everything about it indicates wealth and refinement and culture; and there is no denying that she is one of the most attractive girls in society in this city: certainly I have seen none whom I have admired more."

"That is all very true, perhaps," was the reply; "but her father was very badly bitten during that wheat corner last month, and in fact he has been losing heavily for the last two years. Warden, who is his broker on 'Change, let it leak out in more ways than one; and that wife of Warden's is a regular scandal-monger,—she can't help talking, and everything she manages to extract from him in the way of information goes broadcast over the entire city. Of course, when the corner broke, as it did, old Vincent managed to pull out of it without absolute loss of his homestead and his entire business. But the rally came only in the nick of time. I am told that Warden has said that if wheat had gone up one cent higher it would have knocked Vincent out of time; he never could have come to again. Gordon Noel, we have another plan for you. Wait until Ned Terry's sister gets back from the East; between her and her brother they have just about as much money invested in the best-paying business in this town as any people that I can possibly name. She's a belle; she's just as pretty as Miss Vincent. She isn't as smart, perhaps, but she is a woman worth cultivating. Now, hold your horses. Where did you meet her, by the way?"

"I first met her at the Thorntons' dinner-party. She was there with Captain Lane, and some other young people whom I had not previously met."

"Oh, yes; that reminds me. It seems to me I have heard once or twice that your friend Lane was very much smitten in that quarter. Now, you'd much better let him carry off Miss Vincent, if he can. She would suit his modest views of life very well. But I don't believe the girl has a penny to her fortune; at least she certainly won't if Vincent has no more luck in the future than he has had in the last year."

"I took her down to dinner," said Noel, thoughtfully, "and I remember that she talked a good deal about the army, and asked a great many questions about the cavalry. Now that you speak of it, I noticed that Lane, who sat on the opposite side of the table, didn't seem to be particularly interested in the lady whom he was escorting, although of course he had to be civil and tried to keep up a conversation, but every now and then I would catch him looking at us, and particularly at her. But she looked so pretty that I didn't wonder at it."

"When did you next see her?" said Withers.

"Only last night. You know, I was called away almost immediately after the Thornton affair, and had to go on to New York on the court-martial, where I was summoned as a witness, then only got back in time for the party last night. That was my second meeting with her, and by this time Lane had gone out to join the regiment. I didn't even have a chance to say good-by to him. Do you think, really, that he was smitten in that quarter?"

"That's what I certainly heard," said Withers; "and as soon as

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you get to know young people in society, I venture to say that you can readily find out all about it. These girls all know one another's secrets, and are generally pretty ready to tell them. That's the result of my experience."

It was evident that Amos Withers's cousin was not to be neglected in the Queen City. Two parties at private houses, a reception at the club, and three dinners were the invitations which he found awaiting him at his office. Half an hour was occupied in acknowledging and accepting or declining, as happened to be the case, these evidences of hospitality; then, having no especial interest in the morning paper, his thoughts again reverted to what Mr. Withers had been telling him about Miss Vincent, and the possible relation between her and his regimental comrade. He had been very much impressed with her the night before. Her beauty was of such a rare and radiant character, she was so genial and unaffected in her manner, so bright and winning, with such an evident liking for his society, that Mr. Noel had come away flattering himself that he had made in this quarter a most favorable impression. He had thought of her very much as he went home from the party,—of her interested face, as he talked or danced with her; and she danced delightfully, and was so good as to say that his step perfectly suited hers. He remembered now, too, her remark that it was so delightful to dance with army officers, and graduates of the Point, they all seemed to feel so thoroughly at home on the floor.

Noel was not a graduate of the Point by any means; but he saw no reason for disenchanting her on that score. He was quite as good as any of the West-Pointers, in his own opinion, and in society was very much more at home than many of their number. As a dancer he was looked upon in his regiment and throughout the cavalry as one of the most accomplished in the whole service. And all this interest and all this cordiality he had accepted without hesitation as a tribute to his own superior qualifications and attractiveness. It was therefore with a feeling akin to pique that he heard of this possible engagement existing between her and Captain Lane.

In all the Eleventh Cavalry there was no man whom Gordon Noel feared and possibly hated more than he did Captain Lane. This arose from the fact that Lane as adjutant of the regiment had seen all the communications that passed from time to time relative to Noel's absence from his command when his services were most needed and when any man of spirit would have taken every possible precaution to be with it. He knew how silent Lane had always been, and how thorough a custodian of regimental secrets he was considered. But all the same the mere fact that Lane knew all these circumstances so much to his disadvantage, and had seen all his lame and impotent excuses, had made him fear him as a possible enemy and hate him simply because he stood in awe of him.

No one, to watch Noel in society or in the presence of his brother officers, would suppose for a moment that he looked upon Lane with other than feelings of the warmest regard and comradeship. It was only in his secret thoughts, which he admitted to no soul on earth, that Noel realized what his real feelings were towards a man who had never

done him a wrong, but who had treated him on all occasions, public and private, with courtesy and consideration.

For some reason or other the lieutenant felt restless and dissatisfied this morning. The atmosphere of the office was decidedly uncongenial. He was a man who rarely read anything, and to whom letter-writing was a bore. To be sure, he had little of it to do, for no man in the regiment had expressed a desire to hear from him. It was a hot, sultry day; the stylish white flannel suit in which he had arrayed his handsome self was wasting its elegance on the desert air of a bare and empty room, instead of being seen in the boudoirs of beauty or the billiard-rooms at the club. Business was slack: no recruits were coming in, and Mr. Noel could stand it no longer. A ring from his bell summoned the sergeant to the room.

"There doesn't seem to be any likelihood of recruits coming in such a day as this, sergeant," said Mr. Noel. "I'm going up to the club for a while; if anybody should come in, send one of the men up there for me; I'll return at once." And with that he took his straw hat and light cane and strolled leisurely up the street. His was a figure that many a man—and more women—would turn to look at more than once. Tall, slim, elegant in build, always dressed in excellent taste, Gordon Noel in any community would have been pronounced a remarkably presentable man. His face, as has been said, was very fine; his eyes dark and handsome, shaded by deep, thick lashes; his hair dark and waving; his moustache, dark and drooping, served only to enhance the brilliancy of the even white teeth that flashed underneath it in his frequent smiles and joyous laughter. One would say, in looking at Noel, that he was a man of singularly sunny disposition; and so he was, and so they found him at the club; and so the loungers there hailed him with jovial shouts as he entered; for, though only a fortnight had elapsed since his arrival, and four days of that time he had been absent, giving his testimony before the court-martial in New York harbor, he had nevertheless won his way into the hearts of all the young fellows around the club, and no more popular man than Gordon Noel had ever come within the doors of "The Queen City."

"What are you going to have, old man?" was the first question asked, and Noel laughingly ordered a sherry-cobbler, saying the day was far too hot for anything stronger.

"Who's that I just saw going into the billiard-room?" he asked.

"That? that's Regy Vincent. Haven't you met him yet?"

"Regy Vincent," said Noel. "Is he the brother of the Miss Vincent whom I met at the party last night?"

"The very same," was the reply. "Mighty bright fellow, too, and a very jolly one; though he has been in hard luck of late."

"How in hard luck?" asked a quiet-looking man seated in a big arm-chair, lowering for a moment the newspaper which he had been reading.

"Well, through his father's ill luck on 'Change. You all know, of course, that Vincent was nearly busted before that corner went under last week."

"I know this," was the calm reply, "that while he did stand for a

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"Well, of course, Harris, you must know more about it than I do. But you cannot be gladder than I am to hear that Vincent's status is so much better than we supposed. I'm glad on his account, I'm glad on Regy's account, and I'm particularly glad on Miss Mabel's account. And now I'm particularly chuckling over Billy Rossiter's frame of mind when he hears the real truth of this matter. When he went after her to Rome last year, and everybody supposed that Vincent was worth a million, there's no doubt in the world that he did his best to win her, and that was what he was sent abroad by his father to do. But he didn't win her then, for she strenuously denied any engagement when she came back here; yet it was supposed that if he persevered his chances would be good. Why, he's not half a bad fellow, only he can't marry so long as he is in his father's employ and dependent on him, unless he marries according to his father's wishes; and the old man called him off just as soon as he found out that Vincent was on the verge of failure. Billy Rossiter has lost any chance that he might have had in that quarter; for she'll never look at him again."

"Served him right, if that be the case. Any man who hasn't sense enough to stick to a girl who is bright and pretty as Mabel Vincent, rich or poor, deserves no luck at all in this world. But that reminds me, Captain Noel, according to rumor and what the girls say in society,—and you know they generally know pretty much everything that is going on,—there is something more than a mere understanding between her and your predecessor here, the recruiting officer, Lieutenant Lane. Did he say anything about it to you?"

"No, not a word. I think, though, that had there been anything in the story Lane would have let me know something about it, for we are very old and intimate friends. Did you say that that was Mr. Reginald Vincent who has just gone into the billiard-room?"

"Yes," answered Mr. Morris, "that's he. Would you like to know him?"

"Very much indeed; and if you've nothing better to do, come in and present me. Perhaps he will want to play a game of billiards, and if so I'm his man."

And so it happened that, that very morning, Gordon Noel was presented to Reginald Vincent, and when Regy went home to luncheon he spoke enthusiastically of his new-found acquaintance, whom he pronounced to be one of the most delightful fellows he had ever met anywhere, and who was such a warm and devoted friend of Captain Lane. "I want, if I meet him this afternoon, as I probably shall, to bring him back to dinner with me. What say you, mother?—just informally."

"Don't you think it would be better to wait a day or two, and have a little dinner, and invite a few friends to meet him?" asked Mrs. Vincent. "Your father, perhaps, would like to be consulted in the matter. I've no doubt that he would like to do something to show attention to any friend of Captain Lane's. What do you think, Mabel?"

"I vote for both," replied that young woman, with much alacrity. "I have met Mr. Noel twice."

"Captain Noel, dear," said Regy; "Captain Noel."

"He is not a captain yet, Reginald: I happen to know from the regimental roster: I have a copy up-stairs, that Captain Lane very kindly left me." And here a decided blush stole up the fair cheeks of the young lady. "I learned a good deal about the officers of the regiment from Mr. Lane—Captain Lane—while he was here. Mr. Noel ranks second among the lieutenants of the regiment. As Captain Lane said, he is so very near his captaincy that perhaps he accepts the title that you all give him at the club as only a trifle premature."

"Well, captain or lieutenant, it doesn't make any difference," said Regy, impulsively: "he's a mighty good fellow, and a mighty good friend of your friend Captain Lane, and if you have no objection, mother, I'll bring him around to dinner to-night, and then perhaps we might go to the theatre afterwards. I'm very sure that Captain Noel will enjoy it. Fact is, he enjoys everything. Everybody in the club is perfectly delighted with him. You ought to hear him sing an Irish song or tell a French story! I'll try and get him started when he comes here. He's a wonderful mimic; and he's so full of information about their service on the frontier. Now, Lane so seldom spoke of anything of the kind; but Noel will talk for hours at a time about the wonderful country through which they have scouted and fought, and all that they have been through in their campaigns. By Jove! but that fellow has seen a lot of hard service, and has been through some hair-breadth escapes!"

"Who?" inquired Mrs. Vincent; "Captain Lane or Mr. Noel?"

"Noel, of course,—Noel I'm speaking of. Lane, no doubt, saw a great deal of service with the regiment; but Noel says that he was adjutant so much of the time, and on other staff-duty, while he (Noel) was almost incessantly scouting, hunting after various Indian parties, and being on the war-path, as he laughingly expresses it."

"Does he mean that Captain Lane didn't see much actual service there?" asked Miss Mabel, with heightened color.

"Oh, I don't know that he means that. Don't understand me as saying for a moment that Noel disparages Lane's services; on the contrary, he never speaks of him except with the most enthusiastic regard. Neither does he boast at all of his own service; only you can't help seeing, in the modest, off-hand way in which he speaks of his campaigning, what a deal of hardship and danger he has encountered for the simple reason that he was with the command that had to go through it all."

"Your father tells me," said Mrs. Vincent, "that he met him one

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day on 'Change when Mr. Withers brought him in; that was before the crash, and when he had no time to pay him any attention. Of course the cousin of Mr. Amos Withers was received with a great deal of bowing and scraping by Mr. Withers's friends in that honorable body. But all the same I know your father will be glad to meet Mr. Noel now; and by all means bring him, if you feel disposed, to-night. What manner of looking man is he?"

"A remarkably handsome man, mother," said Mabel, at once,—"one of the handsomest I ever saw; and he certainly made himself very entertaining and very jolly the night we sat together at dinner at the Thorntons'."

"There's a great contrast physically between him and Lane," put in Regy. "Noel is such an elegantly built fellow,—so tall and fine-looking. Lane would be almost undersized when standing beside him, and is very much at a disadvantage when they appear together, I should judge."

A very bright and joyous party it was, seated around the home-like table of the Vincents that evening, and, as Regy had predicted, Noel proved very entertaining and a most agreeable guest. While showing much deference to Mr. Vincent and attention to his good wife, he nevertheless managed to have a great deal to say about the regiment and its daring and perilous service on the frontier, and to throw in here and there many a pleasant word about Captain Lane and their long and intimate acquaintance, and before dinner was over had won a warm place in Mabel Vincent's heart by the way in which he so frequently spoke of the man to whom she had plighted her troth.

And that very evening, as Frederick Lane,—far out under the star-lit sky of Arizona,—with his heart full of longing and love for her, and thinking only of her as he rode over the desolate plain with the lights of old Fort Graham already in view, Mabel Vincent, seated by Gordon Noel's side, was looking up into his handsome face and listening to his animated voice between the acts of "Twelfth Night."

IX.

Only a short distance from the Arizona border, with the blue range of the Santa Catarina shutting out the sunset skies, with sand and cactus and Spanish bayonet on every side, the old post of Fort Graham stood in the desert like a mud-colored oasis. All the quarters, all the store-houses, stables, corrals, and barracks, were built of the native *adobe*; and though whitewash had been liberally applied, especially about the homes of the officers, and the long Venetian blinds at their front windows had been painted the coolest of deep greens, and clear running water sparkled through the *acequias* that bordered the parade, it could not be denied that at its best Graham was an arid and forbidding station, so far as one could judge by appearances. Trees, verdure, turf, were items almost unknown within a day's march of the flag-staff; but in the old times when the Navajoes were the terror of the wide Southwest and even the Comanches sometimes carried their raids across

the Rio Bravo del Norte—the Rio Grande of to-day—the post had been “located” where it might afford protection to the “Forty-Niners” and to the pioneers of the prairies; the trans-continental trail led past its very gates, and many a time and oft the miner and the emigrant thanked God and the general government that the old fort was placed just where it was, for Indian pursuers drew rein when once in sight of its dingy walls; and so from year to year for more than thrice a decade the flag was raised at sunrise, the post was always garrisoned; and now, with the Southern Pacific piercing the range but a short distance below, and landing stores and forage at the quartermaster’s dépôt within four miles of the corrals, it became easier to maintain a force of cavalry at Graham; and one of the troops there stationed was Lane’s new command, the relict of the late lamented Curran, “the Devil’s own D.”

An easy-going old dragoon was Curran, and for years before his retirement it was an open secret that his first sergeant “ran the troop” to suit himself and that the captain never permitted his subalterns to interfere. A more independent, devil-may-care, and occasionally drunken lot of troopers were rarely gathered in one such organization, and, while steady and reliable men on getting their discharges at the end of their term of enlistment would refuse to “take on” again in D Troop, but would go over to Captain Breese or perhaps to a company at another station, all the scamps and rollicking characters in the regiment would drift over into “D” and be welcomed by the choice spirits therein assembled. And this was the gang that Captain Lane was now expected to bring up with a round turn and transform into dutiful soldiers. Obedient to the colonel’s behest, he had stopped over a couple of days at head-quarters, had had a most cordial greeting from every officer at the post, had called on all the ladies,—not omitting his fair defamers,—and then had hastened on to Graham and his new and trying duties. Every day, as he was whirled farther away from the home of her whom he so devotedly loved, he wrote long letters to her, filled with—only lovers know what all. And his heart leaped with joy that topmost in the little packet of letters awaiting him at the adjutant’s office when he reached his post was a dainty billet addressed to him in her beloved hand. Until he could get his quarters in habitable condition the new troop-commander was the guest of Captain and Mrs. Nash; and he could hardly wait for the close of that amiable woman’s welcoming address to reach his room and devour every word of that most precious missive. She had written—bless her!—the very day after he left, and a sweet, womanly letter it was,—so shy and half timid, yet so full of faith and pride in him. Every one at Graham remarked on the wonderful change for the better that had come over Lane since he went East. Never had they seen him so joyous, so blithe in manner. He seemed to walk on air; his eyes beamed on every one; his face seemed “almost to have a halo round it,” said Mrs. Nash, and neither she nor any woman in garrison had the faintest doubt as to the explanation of it all. Love had wrought the change, and being loved had intensified and prolonged it. Every man—every woman in garrison was his friend, and the happy fellow would gladly

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But there were reasons, Mrs. Vincent had said, why it was most desirable that there should be no announcement of the engagement as yet. What these were she did not explain to Mabel herself, but assured her that it was her father’s wish as well. Lane had rushed to the great jewelry-house of Van Loo & Laing, and the diamond solitaire that flashed among the leaves of the exquisite rose-bud he smilingly handed her that night was one to make any woman gasp with delight. Could anything on earth be rich enough, pure enough, fair enough, to lavish on her, his peerless queen?

She had held forth her soft white hand and let him slip it on the engagement finger and then bend the knee like knight of old and kiss it fervently. She revelled in it, rejoiced in it, but, heeding her mother’s advice, stowed it away where none could see it, in the secret drawer of her desk, and Lane was perfectly satisfied. “I will tell you the reason some day,” Mrs. Vincent had said to him, “but not just now, for I might be doing wrong;” and he had protested that she need never tell him. What cared he, so long as Mabel’s love was his, and they understood each other as they did?

And so, while people at Graham plied him with questions and insinuations and side-remarks about the “girl he left behind him” in the East, he kept faithfully to the agreement, and though all the garrison knew he wrote to her every day and took long rides alone that he might think of her, doubtless, and though every one knew that those dainty missives that came so often for Captain Lane were written by Miss Mabel Vincent, never once did he admit the existence of an engagement,—never once until long afterwards.

The first real tidings that the Graham people had of her came in a letter from head-quarters. Mrs. Riggs had had such a long, charming letter from Mr. Noel that she called in several of her cronies and read it all to them; and that very evening one of the number, unable to bear the burden of so much information, shifted it from her mental shoulders by writing it all to Mrs. Nash. Perhaps the best plan will be to read the extract which referred to Lane exactly as Mr. Noel wrote it:

“By this time I presume Fred Lane is busily engaged with his new troop. I served with them in the Sioux campaign, and they never gave me any trouble at all. So, too, in the Geronimo chase a while ago, when Major Brace picked me out to go ahead by night from Carrizo’s I asked for a detachment from D Troop, and the men seemed to appreciate it. I knew they would follow wherever I would lead, and would stand by me through thick and thin. If Lane starts in right I’ve no doubt they will do just as well for him; but I expect he is feeling mighty blue at having to rejoin just now. You know I’ve always been a warm friend of his, and it hurt me to see him so unwilling to go back. No one seemed to know him very well in society; and it’s very queer, for this was his old home,—and I was never more delightfully welcomed anywhere; the people are charming. But Lane had

held himself aloof a good deal, and fellows at the club say he didn't 'run with the right set.' Then, if all accounts be true, he had had hard luck in several ways. I'm told that he lost money in a big wheat speculation, and everybody says he totally lost his heart. I tell you this in confidence because I know you are a devoted friend of his,—as indeed you are of all in the dear old regiment,—but he was much embarrassed when it came to turning over the funds. There was quite a heavy shortage, which he had to make up at a time when it was probably most inconvenient. As to the other loss, it isn't to be wondered at. She is a beautiful and most charming girl, and many a man, I fancy, has laid his heart at her feet. It is said, however, that Lane's loss is the heavier in this case because—well, I fear it will come to nothing. A young lady told me yesterday that there was something back of it all,—that she, Miss Vincent, was deeply in love with a Mr. Rossiter, of New York, and had been for over a year, and they were to have been married this coming September, but that the gentleman (?) learned that her father had been nearly swamped in speculation and had not a penny to give her. My informant went to school with Miss Vincent, and knows her intimately, and she says that Mr. Rossiter simply threw her over a short time ago, and that it was pique and exasperation and to hide her heart-break from the world that Mabel Vincent began to show such pleasure in Lane's devotions. She led him on, so her lady friends say; and now Mr. Rossiter has found out that old Vincent was sharper and shrewder than any one supposed and made instead of losing a pile, and now he is suing to be taken back, and they say that she is so much in love with the fellow that the chances are all in his favor. This is why I feel such sorrow and anxiety for Lane.

"Well, I led the german at a lovely party at the Prendergasts' last night. Miss Vincent was there, looking like a peach-blossom, and we danced together a great deal. When it came time to break up I believe half the people in the rooms came to say good-night to me and to tell me they had never seen so delightful a german,—'everything so depends on the leader.' I have invitations for something or other for every night for the next fortnight; and yet I so often long for the old regiment and the true friends I had to leave. It did me a world of good last night to meet old Colonel Gray, of the retired list, whose home is here, but he commanded the —th Infantry in the Sioux campaign, and when he saw me he threw his arms around my neck and hugged me before the whole throng of people. Give my love to our chief, always, and believe me, dear, true friend of mine,

"Yours most affectionately,
"GORDON NOEL."

Condensed, edited by feminine hands, and accented here and there as suited the writer's mood, this was the letter which formed the basis of the one received by Mrs. Nash. Lane by this time was cosily ensconced in his quarters, and was giving all his time to the improvement of affairs about his troop's barracks, kitchens, and stables, to drill- and target-practice, and to company duties generally. His days knew no

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relaxation from labor from reveille until "retreat" at sunset, and then came the delicious evenings in which he could write to her and read a chapter or two of some favorite work before going early to bed. After the first week he seldom left his house after eight o'clock, and the garrison had therefore ample opportunity to discuss his affairs. Some color was lent to the story of his having lost money in speculation by a letter received from Cheyenne written to the new major of the —th Infantry, who had recently joined by promotion from Fort Russell, near that thriving town. The writer said that Lane of the Eleventh Cavalry had sold his property there for fifteen thousand dollars about the end of June, and he had bought it for twenty-five hundred only nine years before. He could have got eighteen thousand just as well by waiting a few days; but he wanted the money at once.

No one, of course, could ask the captain any direct questions about his affairs of either heart or pocket, but Lane was puzzled to account for some of the remarks that were made to him,—the interrogatories about the methods of speculation, the tentatives as to chances of "making a good thing" in that way, and the sharp and scrutinizing glances that accompanied the queries. The sweet, sympathetic, semi-confidential manner, the inviting way in which the ladies spoke to him of his present loneliness and their hopes that soon he would bring to them a charming wife to share their exile and bless his army home,—all this, too, seemed odd to him; but, as he had never been in love nor engaged before, he did not know but that it was "always the way with them," and so let it pass.

And then he was very happy in her letters. They were neither as frequent nor as long as his, but then she had such a round of social duties; she was in such constant demand; there were visitors or parties every night, and endless calls and shopping-tours with mother every day, and she was really getting a little run down. The weather was oppressively warm, and they longed to get away from the city and go to the mountains. It was only a day's ride to the lovely resorts in the Alleghanies, but papa was looking a little thin and worn again, and the doctors had said his heart was affected,—not alarmingly or seriously, but mamma could not bear to leave him, and he declared it utterly impossible to be away from his business a single day. He and Mr. Clark were very hopeful over a new venture they had made, the nature of which she did not thoroughly understand.

But let us take a peep at some of those early letters,—not at the answers to his eager questions, not at the shy words of maiden love that crept in here and there, but at those pages any one might read.

"Tuesday night.

"... Such a delightful german as we had last night at the Prendergasts'! Captain Noel led—I have to call him captain, for every one does here, and if I say 'Mr.' they want to know why, and it is embarrassing to explain how I know. He leads remarkably well, and I was very proud of 'our regiment,' sir, when listening to all the nice things said about him. How I wished for a certain other cavalry captain, now so many cruel miles away! Mr. Noel took me out often,—and

indeed I was a decided belle,—and he told me that he had to lead with Miss Prendergast, but would so much rather dance with me.

"It is almost settled that we go away in August for the entire month. Dr. Post says mother must go, and that father ought to go. Of course I go with mamma. Deer Park will doubtless be the favored spot. I wish August were here; I wish you were here; I wish—oh, so many things! Your letters are such a delight to me. I wonder if other girls have anything like them. Yes, you shall have the picture on my birthday; but mind, sir, you are to take the utmost care of it, or the original will feel neglected."

"Friday night.

"... So many interruptions to-day, dear Fred! You see what an incoherent thing this is thus far, and now I'm tired out. We had a charming time at the Woodrows' dinner last evening. The day had been hot, but their table was set on the lawn under a canopy, and, the walls being raised, we had a delightful breeze from the river. Their place is one of the finest on the heights. I did so wish you could have seen it. Captain Noel took me in, and was so bright and jolly and full of anecdote. Everybody likes him, and I like him mainly because he is such a loyal friend of yours. He talks so much of you and of all the dangers you have shared in common; and you know how interesting all this must be to me. Sometimes I wonder that you had so little to say about him,—though you never *did* talk much about the regiment and never would talk much about yourself. Wednesday evening we had a little theatre-party. Regy got it up, and we just filled two adjoining loges. Captain Noel was Fanny Holton's escort, but he talked most of the time with me,—a thing that my escort, Mr. Forbes, did not seem to like; but, as he *couldn't* talk, and Mr. Noel would, what could I do?"

"Sunday evening.

"It is late, and I ought to be asleep, but the last caller has just gone, and to-morrow there may be no time to write at all, and you are such an exacting, tyrannical, dear old boy that— Well, there, now, let me tell you of the day. You say anything and everything that I say or do is of interest. So, to begin with, yesterday I had a headache, due, I fear, to the late supper Regy gave us at the club after the theatre. Fanny Holton came to take me for a drive, but I did not feel like going, and begged off. Then she told me that Captain Noel was in the carriage waiting, and that he would be so disappointed. Mother came in and said the air would do me good; and so we went, and I came back feeling so much brighter. Mr. Noel was very amusing, and kept us laughing all the time. Coming home, Fanny got out at her house, as she had to dress for dinner, but told the coachman to drive me home and Mr. Noel to the club. He began talking of you the moment she disappeared, and said he so hoped you were going to write regularly to him. Are you? He seems so fond of you; but I do not wonder at that.

"This morning we went to church, and afterwards Mr. Noel joined and walked home with us, and papa begged him to come in to luncheon,

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which he did. You dear fellow! what have you done to my beloved old daddy, that he is so ardent an admirer of yours? He shook Mr. Noel's hand three times before he would let him go, and begged him to come often: he liked to know men, he said, who could so thoroughly appreciate—whom do you think, sir?—Captain Fred Lane. After he had gone, papa spoke of him delightedly on two or three occasions. Will they take him away too as soon as he is really a captain?"

"Wednesday.

"You dear, dear, extravagant fellow! Never have I had such exquisite flowers, or such profusion of them. You must have given your florist *carte blanche*. Nothing that came to me compared with them. My birthday was the cause of quite a little *fête* in the family, and I had some lovely presents. Mr. Noel, too, sent a beautiful basket of roses, and it pleased me very much. I want your comrades to like me, and yet I know he did this on your account. Though he is so thoughtful and delicate and never refers to our engagement, I feel that he knows it; and it seems better that way, somehow.

"You did not answer my questions about him, Fred. Didn't you read my letter?"

Among the letters that came from the Queen City was one which bore the amulous superscription of the head of the firm of Vincent, Clark & Co. It was brief, but it gave Captain Lane a thrill of gladness:

"It was your timely and thoughtful aid that enabled us to recover so much of our losses. You alone came to our rescue, and I fully appreciate the risk you ran. It will never be forgotten.

"Clark will send draft for the entire am't, or deposit to your credit, as you may direct. I go to New York and Chicago in two or three days. Our prospects are flattering."

X.

August was close at hand. Queen City "society" had scattered in every direction. The mountains and the sea-shore were levying tribute on the plethoric pockets of the "big men" on 'Change and in business of every conceivable kind. Blinds and shutters were closed at scores of hospitable mansions in the narrow streets of the old city and even in the elegant villas that crowned the surrounding heights. The sun-glare at mid-day was so intense that no man was safe in venturing forth without a huge sunshade of some kind, and even within the sacred precincts of the club, where broad awnings hung on every side and palm-leaf fans were in constant motion, the men strolled in to luncheon in shirts of lightest flannel or pongee, with rolling collars and infinitesimal neckties. Every one who could leave town had long since gone; and yet the Vincents lingered. Each day seemed to add to the anxiety in the mother's eyes as she watched her husband's aging face. He had returned from a business-trip of ten days or so looking hopeful and buoyant, and had gone to the office the following morning

with light step and cheery demeanor, but came home long after the dinner-hour listless and dispirited,—a severe headache, he said, but the wife knew that it was far more than head- or heartache. The family physician took occasion to warn Mr. Vincent that he was doing himself grievous wrong,—that his health imperatively demanded rest and change of scene. Vincent looked in the good old doctor's face with a world of dumb misery in his eyes, and only answered, "I will,—I will,—in a week or so. I cannot quit my post just now. Clark is taking his vacation. When he returns I'll go." And until he could accompany them Mrs. Vincent refused to budge; and yet she began to urge that Mabel should start now. What was to prevent her going at once and joining the Woodrows at Deer Park? Clarissa and Eleanor Woodrow were always such friends of hers. But Mabel begged that she might stay until both papa and mamma could go too; she could not be content there without them, or at least without mother; and Mrs. Vincent could not find the words in which to frame the cause of her greatest apprehension.

The one man whom the heat was powerless to subdue was Gordon Noel. In the most immaculate and becoming costumes of white or straw color, that genial officer would saunter into the club at noontide, looking provokingly cool and comfortable, and, as he expressed it, "without having turned a hair."

"Hot!" he would say. "Call this hot? Why, bless your hearts, fellows, you ought to live in Arizona awhile! Gad! I've come in sometimes from a scout through the Gila desert and rushed for cold cream to plaster on my nose and cheeks: it would be all melted, of course; but when I clapped it on it would sizzle just like so much lard in a frying-pan. And down at Fort Yuma our hens laid hard-boiled eggs from June to October." And then his eyes would twinkle with fun, and he would bury his dark moustache in the cracked ice of his julep with infinite relish.

"I say," queried Mr. Morris of his chum, Terry junior, one languid afternoon after Noel had jauntily strolled away, "don't you envy a feller who can enjoy life like that?"

"Never saw anything like it!" quoth the younger. "One would suppose that after being a slave all mawning in those beastly works I ought to enjoy a little recreation; but I can't, you know."

"Queer ducks, those army fellers. Gad! this love-making by proxy is what gets me,—this sort of Miles Standish courtship business. She's prettier, though, than the original Priscilla."

"How do you mean?" queried young Terry, vaguely. He had been brought up under the thumb of his elder brother, and, from the outset, had been given to understand that if he expected to share in the profits he must learn the business. There had been no college for him, and New England legends were sealed books.

"Why, I mean that 'twouldn't surprise me a bit if we had a modern version of the old 'Why don't you speak for yourself, John?' He's with her incessantly."

"Oh! Miss Vincent you're speaking of. Her name's Mabel, I thought, not—what'd you call her?"

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"Never mind, Jimmy," said Morris, rising. "Come and have a cigarette."

And it was not only in the club, over their cigars, that men spoke significantly of Noel's attentions to the lovely daughter of the house of Vincent. It was not the men, indeed, who did the greater part of the talk. If *they* noticed and spoke of it, what must not the women have been saying! Noel, quitting the hospitable roof of Cousin Amos, had taken rooms down in town, midway between the club and the Vincent homestead, and those two points became the limits of his field of action. The Withers household had gone to the Maryland mountains, and the massive master of the establishment was treating himself to a month's vacation. Almost all the pretty girls were gone. What more natural than that Mr. Noel should so frequently seek the society of the prettiest of all, even if she were engaged to Frederick Lane, as people said she was before he went away? There was no monitorial Amos to call him off, no one to bid him turn his devotions elsewhere; and she herself could see no harm, for was not almost all his talk of Captain Lane? was he not his loyal and devoted friend? The captain's letters came every day, and he seemed pleased to know that Noel had such pleasant things to say of him, and was so attentive,—or rather kind, because it wasn't really on her account that he came so frequently. To be sure, Captain Lane did not say much about the matter one way or the other; and if he saw no harm, if he expressed no dissatisfaction, who else had any right to find fault?

Her mother, was the answer that conscience pricked into her heart quicker even than she could think. For days past the good lady's manner to Noel had been gaining in distance and coolness. "She is ill at ease,—worried about papa," was Mabel's attempt at a self-satisfying plea; but conscience again warned her that she knew better,—far better. Her father, engrossed in business cares that seemed only to increase with every day, had no eyes or ears for affairs domestic; and so it resulted that when Noel came sauntering in at evening with his jaunty, debonair, joyous manner, there was no one to receive him but Mabel, and he wanted no one more.

"Does Captain Lane know of this and approve it?" was the grave question her mother had at last propounded.

"I have written to him with the utmost frankness, mother," was Miss Vincent's reply, while a wave of color swept over her face and a rebellious light gleamed in her eyes, "and he has never hinted at such a thing as disapproval. He has more confidence in me than you have. If he had not—"

But the rest was left unsaid.

Poor Mrs. Vincent! She turned away, well knowing that argument or opposition in such matters was mistaken policy. The words that sprang to her lips were, "Alas! he does not know you as I do!" but she shut those lips firmly, rigorously denying herself the feminine luxury of the last word and the launching of a Parthian arrow that would have made, indeed, a telling shot. If heaven is what it is painted, there can be no more joy over the sinner that repenteth than

over the woman who tramples down her fiercest temptation and "bridleth her tongue." Mrs. Vincent deserved to be canonized.

And meantime how went the world with Lane? Faithful, honest, simple-hearted man that he was, holding himself in such modest estimation, marvelling as he often did over the fact that he could have really won the love of a being so radiant, so exquisite, as Mabel, he lived in a dream that was all bliss and beauty, except for the incessant and all-pervading longing to see her,—to be near her. He loved her with an intensity that he had no means of expressing. Not a waking instant was she absent from his thoughts, and in his dreams she appeared to him, crowned with a halo such as never angel knew. He used to lie awake at times in the dead hours of the night, wondering if the very newsboys and workmen of the city realized their blessed privilege, that they could step upon the flagstones her little foot had pressed, that they could see her face, perhaps hear her voice, as she strolled in the cool of evening along the gravelled pathway of the little park that adjoined her home. Loving her as he did, his heart went out to any one who knew her or was even familiar with the city where she dwelt. He had felt for years a contempt for Gordon Noel that, at times, he had difficulty in disguising. Now he was tempted to write to him, to shut out the past, to open confidential relations and have him write long letters that should tell of her. There were three men in his troop in whom he felt a vague, mysterious interest simply because they had been enlisted at the old rendezvous on Sycamore Street, only three squares from her home. He was so full of hope and faith and love and gratitude that the whole garrison seemed to hold naught but cheer and friendliness. He never dreamed of the stories the men were telling or the confidences women were whispering about the post. Noel had written again to Mrs. Riggs, and Mrs. Riggs had not spared her information. It was now said in Queen City society that the engagement was of Mr. Vincent's making. He had been associated with Lane in some speculations that proved disastrous, but the captain had shown such command of money and had "put up" at such an opportune moment that they came out in good shape after all, and as soon as the old man found that Lane loved his daughter he insisted on her accepting him. The information about Lane's coming to the rescue with money he had heard from Mr. Vincent himself,—as indeed he had. One evening when they were for the moment alone, in a burst of confidence to the man whom he believed to be a devoted friend of his prospective son-in-law, Vincent had told the silent officer the story of that perilous crisis and of Lane's prompt and generous loan,—but not as Noel told it to Mrs. Riggs.

"Do not distress yourself, my darling one," wrote Lane to his fiancée, "because your letters are a little less frequent just now. I know how occupied you must be with preparation, and how anxious you are about the dear old father. Next week you will be in the mountains; and then, as you say, people will give you time to write, and then, too, I shall be happy in your regaining health and spirits. The papers tell me how intense has been the heat: it almost equals ours here in one way, and is much worse in being moist and muggy. There is a pros-

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pect of my going on a two weeks' scout with my whole troop early in the month; but your letters will reach me safely."

Why was it that she should experience a feeling almost of relief in reading that he was going to be absent from the garrison awhile,—going out on a two weeks' scout?

She had sent him, as she promised, a lovely cabinet photograph of herself that had been taken expressly for him. It came to the old frontier fort just as the men were marching up from evening stables, and the messenger, distributing the mail about the post, handed the packet to the captain as he stood with a little knot of comrades on the walk. There was instant demand that he should open it and show the picture to them, but, blushing like a girl, he broke away and hid himself in his room; and then, when sure of being uninterrupted, he took it to the window and feasted his eyes upon the exquisite face and form there portrayed. He kept it from that time in a silken case, which he locked in a bureau drawer whenever he left the house, but in the evenings, or when writing at his desk, he brought it forth to light again and set it where every moment he could look upon and almost worship it.

And then came her letters announcing their safe arrival at Deer Park:

"Our journey was most trying, for the heat was intolerable until we got well up among the mountains. Papa came; but I know he is simply fretting his heart out with anxiety to get back to the office. Mr. Clark only returned from his vacation the day we started. Gordon Noel came down to the train to see us off, and brought mother a basket of such luscious fruit. He says that he has no home to go to, now that we are gone. Indeed, he has been very thoughtful and kind, and I don't think he is quite happy, despite his efforts to be always gay and cheerful. . . .

"Do you really mean that you will be gone a fortnight? How I shall miss your dear letters, Fred! And now indeed I will try to write regularly. There's no one here I care anything about, though the hotel seems very full, and there is much dancing and gayety. You say my letters will reach you; but I wonder how."

Lane read this with a sigh of relief. He had persuaded himself that it was because he dreaded the effect of the long-continued hot weather upon her that he so desired her to get to the mountains. Any other thought would have been disloyalty to his queen. He wished—just a little bit—that she had not written of him as Gordon Noel: he much preferred that she should call him Captain. She would not write so fully and frankly of him if he were anything but friendly, he argued, and she would not tolerate his visits on any other grounds. Yet she did not tell him that they had walked up and down the platform together for ten minutes before the train started, and that when it was time to part he had bent down and said, almost in a whisper,—

"Do you want to send a message for me to Fred Lane in your next letter?"

"I will do so, if you wish," she murmured; but her eyes fell before the gaze in his, and the hot blood rushed to her face.

"Tell him there's no man in all the regiment I so long to see, and no man in all the world—I so envy."

Probably conscience smote her, for during the week that followed five letters came,—five letters in seven days! His heart went wild with delight over their tenderness. The last was written Saturday, and then none came for three days; and when the fourth day came and brought the longed-for missive it was a disappointment, somehow.

"Papa left us to go back to the office last night," she wrote. "He could stand it no longer. I fear it did him little good here. The Witherses came on Saturday, and that strange girl, Miss Marshall, is with them. She always impresses me with the idea that she is striving to read my thoughts. She speaks so admiringly of you, and says you were 'so courteous' to her the night you dined at the Witherses'; and I do not remember your ever saying anything about her to me. You see, sir, I am much more communicative about my friends.

"We had such a delightful surprise Saturday night. Who should appear in the hop-room but Gordon Noel? He stayed until the mid-night train Sunday; and I really was very glad to see him."

And here Lane stopped reading for a while.

XI.

For some reason or other, the scout which Lane's company had been ordered to hold itself in readiness to make was postponed, no further orders coming from Department head-quarters which required sending any troops into the mountains west of Fort Graham. The captain, far from being disappointed, seemed strangely relieved that he was not required to take his troop into the field at that particular moment. "Something had happened," said Mrs. Breese, who was a keen observer, "to change the spirit of his dream within the last few days." His face lacked the radiant and joyous look that it had had ever since he came back from the East. "Is he getting an inkling of the stories that are in circulation?" was the natural inquiry. "Is he beginning to learn that others were before him in that fair charmer's regard?" Still, no one could question him. There was something about him, with all his frankness and kindness, that held people aloof from anything like confidence. He never had a confidant of either sex; and this was something that rendered him at one time somewhat unpopular among the women. Younger officers almost always, as a rule, had chosen some one of the married ladies of the regiment as a repository of their cares and anxieties, their hopes and fears; but Lane had never indulged in any such luxury, and all the better for him was it. Now it was noticed with what eagerness and anxiety he watched for the coming of the mail. It was also observed that during the two weeks that followed only four letters were received in her, by this time, well-known superscription. Lane, of course, reading the contents, could readily account for the scarcity. Her letters were full of descriptions of dances and picnics and riding-parties to the neighboring mountains. They had met scores of pleasant people, and had become acquainted with a

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large circle from all parts of the country. They danced every evening regularly in the hop-room, and were so thoroughly acquainted, and so accustomed to one another's moods and fancies, that hardly an hour passed in which they were not occupied in some pleasant recreation. Lawn-tennis had always been a favorite game of hers, and her mother was glad, she said, to see her picking it up again with such alacrity. The open air was doing her good: her color was returning; the languor and weakness which had oppressed her when she first arrived after the long hot spell at home had disappeared entirely. But with returning health came all the longing for out-door active occupation, and, instead of having, as she had planned, hours in which to write to him, almost all her time now was taken up in joyous sports, in horse-back-rides, in long drives over the mountain-roads and through the beautiful scenery by which they were surrounded. "And so," she said, "Fred, dear, in regaining health and color, I fear, your Mabel has very sadly neglected you."

His reply to her letter telling him of Mr. Noel's unexpected appearance at the Park was rather a difficult one for him to write. It was dawning upon him that the attentions of his regimental comrade to his *fiancée* were not as entirely platonic as they might be. Desire to show all courtesy and kindness to the lady-love of another officer was all very well in its way, but it did not necessitate daily calls when at home, and far less did it warrant his leaving his station without permission—running the risk of a reprimand, or even possible court-martial—and taking a long journey, being absent from his post all Saturday and certainly not returning there before the afternoon of Monday. If this were known at the head-quarters of the recruiting service, Lieutenant Noel in all probability would be rapped severely over the knuckles, if nothing worse. Lane could not, and would not, for an instant blame his *fiancée*, but he gently pointed out to her that Mr. Noel ran great risks in making such a journey, and that it would be well on that account to discourage similar expeditions in the future. To this she made no direct reply; but that she observed his caution is quite possible. At all events, no further mention of visits on the part of Mr. Noel appeared in any of the letters which reached him before the orders for the scout actually did arrive; but that was not until near the very end of the month. It was just about the 28th of August when rumors came of turbulence and threatened outbreak among the Indians at the Chiricahua Reservation. Troops were already marching thither from the stations in Arizona, and Captain Lane was ordered to cross the range and scout on the east side of the reservation, in order to drive back any renegades who might be tempted to "make a break." Just one day before the start he was surprised at receiving a letter from Mrs. Vincent. She spoke gladly of Mabel's improved health and appearance; she spoke hopefully of Mr. Vincent, whose letters, she said, were more cheerful than they had been, and who had been able to come up and spend two Sundays with them. Mabel had doubtless told him of Mr. Noel's visit, and how glad they were just then to see any face so pleasant and familiar. And now she wished to remind him of their contract before

his leaving for the frontier. He doubtless remembered that she had promised that in the near future she would give him the reasons why it seemed best to her that the engagement should not be announced. It would take a pretty long letter to tell all the reasons why, so she would not venture upon that at the moment; but the necessity no longer existed, and if he so desired she would gladly have it now made known to his relatives, as she would now proceed to announce it to Mabel's.

Lane was greatly rejoiced at this. He had been a trifle uneasy and despondent of late, yet scarcely knew why. Her letters were not all he had hoped they would be by this time; but then he did not know but that it was all natural and right; he had never had love-letters before,—had never seen them,—and his ideas of what a woman's letters to her betrothed should be were somewhat vague and undefined. However, there was no one in the garrison to whom he specially cared to formally announce his engagement. People had ceased of late making remarks or inquiries, as nothing had been successful in extracting information from him in the past. Giving directions that his mail should be forwarded once a week, or twice a week if possible, to the railway-station nearest the Chiricahua Mountains, where he could get it by sending couriers once in a while, provided there was no danger in doing so, Lane marched away one evening on what proved to be an absence of an entire month. He never again saw Fort Graham until the end of September, and then only long enough to enable him to change from his scouting-rig into travelling costume, to throw a few clothes into a trunk, and to drive to the railway-station as fast as the ambulance could carry him, in order to catch the first express-train going East.

Nothing of very great importance had occurred on the scout. A few renegades managed to escape eastward from the reservation and to take to the mountains, through which Lane's command was then scouting; and to him and to his troop was intrusted the duty of capturing and bringing them back to the reservation. This took him many a long mile south of the railway. It was three weeks and more before he made his way to the reservation with his prisoners. There he found a small package of letters which had been forwarded direct from Graham, where they evidently knew that he would go into the Agency before reaching the railway, where his other letters were probably awaiting him. Among those which he received was one from Mr. Vincent. Briefly, it said to him, "If a possible thing, come to us as soon as you can obtain leave of absence. There are matters which excite my greatest apprehension, and I feel that I must see you. My health, I regret to say, is failing me rapidly. Come, if you can." Another was from Mrs. Vincent: she spoke with great anxiety of Mr. Vincent's waning health; said very little of Mabel, nothing whatever of Mr. Noel. She told him that the engagement had been formally announced to all their relatives, and that letters of congratulation had been showered on Mabel from all sides,—although there was some little surprise expressed that she should marry an army officer. "She, herself, has not been well at all, and I really believe that a visit from

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In this same package of letters were two from Mabel. These he read with infinite yearning in his heart, and they only served to increase the wordless anxiety and the intolerable sense of something lacking which he had first felt after the letter that announced Gordon Noel's visit to Deer Park. One more letter there was: this he opened, saw that it was type-written and had no signature, indignantly tore it into fragments, and tossed them to the wind.

The commanding general of the Department—an old and kind friend of Lane's—was then looking over affairs for himself, at the reservation. Lane obtained a few moments' conversation with him, briefly stated his needs, and showed him Mr. Vincent's letter. The instant the general saw the signature he looked up, startled, and then arose from his seat, put his hand on the captain's shoulder, and drew him to one side.

"My dear boy," he said, "there is later news than this. It is dated September 14, you see. Have you heard nothing more?"

"Nothing, general. What has happened?" answered Lane, his voice trembling and his bronzed face rapidly paling. "Am I—am I too late?"

"I fear so, Lane. Had Mr. Vincent a partner named Clark?"

"Yes, sir,—his junior partner."

"Clark defaulted, embezzled, hypotheated securities and heaven knows what all, blew out his brains in his private office, and Mr. Vincent stumbled over the body an hour afterwards, was prostrated by the shock, and died of heart-failure three days later. The papers were full of the tragedy for nearly a week; but there are none to be had here, I'm afraid. Now you will want to start at once. Never mind your troop. Just tell your lieutenant to report here to Captain Bright for orders, and I'll have them sent back to Graham by easy marches."

Late at night Lane reached the railway, only to find his train five hours behind. He telegraphed to Mabel that he would come to her as fast as train could bring him,—that the sad news had only just reached him. He strode for hours up and down the little platform under the glittering stars, yearning to reach her, to comfort and console her in this bitter sorrow. Time and again he turned over in mind the few particulars which he had obtained from the Department commander. They were all too brief, but pointed conclusively to one fact,—that Clark had been encouraged by the success of June to plunge still more deeply, in the hope of retrieving the losses of the past two years. Luckily for Vincent, he had used his June winnings in lifting the mortgage from his homestead and in taking up any of his outstanding paper, and so had little wherewith to supply his confident partner; but Lane wondered if the kindly old man had any idea that up to the end of August, at least, Clark had not sent to him, as directed, "the draft for the entire amount" to which referred the first letter Mr. Vincent had ever written him.

It was daybreak when the train came. It was noon when he sprang from the cars at Graham Station and into the ambulance sent to meet

him in response to his telegraphic request. Were there any letters? he eagerly asked. None now. A small package had been forwarded to the reservation last night, and must have passed him on the way. Others had been waiting for him at the mountain-station until he was reported by wire as arriving with his prisoners at the Agency. Everything then had been sent thither, and there would be no getting them before starting. At Graham the telegraph operator showed him the duplicates of the telegrams that had come for him in his absence,—only two. One announced Mr. Clark's suicide and Vincent's prostration and danger; the other, two days later, briefly read, "Mr. Vincent died this morning. Mrs. Vincent and Mabel fairly well."

Both were signed "Gordon Noel," and a jealous pang shot through the poor fellow's heart as he realized that in all their bereavement and grief it was Noel's privilege to be with them and to be of use to them, while he, her affianced husband, was far beyond hail. He was ashamed of his own thoughts an instant after, and bitterly upbraided himself that he was not thankful that they could have had so attentive and thoughtful an aid as Noel well knew how to be. Yet—why was not Reginald sufficient?

He had torn into fragments the anonymous sheet that had met him at the reservation, and yet its words were gnawing at his heartstrings now, and he could not crush them down:

"Why was your engagement denied? Because she still cared for Will Rossiter and hoped he might come back to her after all.

"Why did Gordon Noel stay at the other hotel the second and third times he spent Sunday at Deer Park? Because she wished to hide from her mother, as she did from you, that he came at all.

"Why does she meet him on the street instead of at home? Because her father interposed in your behalf; but all the same you are being betrayed."

These words—or others exactly of their import, were what met his startled eyes at Cuicahua, but the instant he noted that these carefully type-written sentences were followed by no signature at all,—not even the oft-abused "A Friend,"—indignation and wrath followed close on the heels of his amazement, and in utter contempt he had destroyed the cowardly sheet; but he could not so easily conquer the poison thus injected in his veins. All the long, long journey to the East they haunted him, dancing before his eyes, sleeping or waking, and it was with haggard face and wearied frame that he reached the Queen City, and, taking a cab, drove at once to her home.

It was a lovely evening in early October. The sun had been shining brilliantly all day long, and almost everywhere doors and windows were open to woo the cool air now gently stirring. The cab stopped before the well-remembered steps, and Lane hastened to the broad door-way. No need to ring: the portals stood invitingly open. The gas burned brightly in the hall and in the sitting-room to the left. He entered unhesitatingly, and stood all alone in the room where he had spent so many happy hours listening to the music of her voice, watching the play and animation in her lovely face. He caught a glimpse of his own, gaunt, haggard, hollow-eyed, in the mirror over

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the old-fashioned mantel. What was he, that he should have won a creature so radiant, so exquisite, as the girl who had made these silent rooms a heaven to him? There was the heavy portière that shut off the little passage to the library. His foot-fall made no sound in the deep, rich carpeting. It was there she welcomed him that wonderful Friday afternoon,—that day that was the turning-point, the climax, of his life. Hark! was that her voice, low, sweet, tremulous, in there now? Hush! Was that a sob?—a woman's suppressed weeping? Quickly he stepped forward, and in an instant had thrust aside the second portière; but he halted short at the threshold, petrified by the scene before him.

Mabel Vincent, clasped in Gordon Noel's embrace, her arms about his neck, gazing up into his face with almost worship in her weeping eyes, raised her lips to meet the passionate kiss of his. "My darling," he murmured, "what can you fear? Have you not given me the right to protect you?" And the handsome head was tossed proudly back and for one little minute was indeed heroic. Then, with instantaneous change, every drop of blood fled from his face, leaving it ashen, death-like.

"Gordon!" she cried, "what is it? Are you ill?"

Then, following the glance of his staring eyes, she turned, and saw, and swooned away.

XII.

A dreary winter was that of 188—at old Fort Graham. Captain Breese became major of the —th, and his troop was ordered to exchange with K, which had been so long at head-quarters, and this brought old Jim Rawlins up to take command of the little cavalry battalion at "the oasis." There were many of the officers—Rawlins among them—who thought that after his success with "the Devil's Own," as D Troop had been called, Lane was entitled to enjoy the position of battalion commander; but Mrs. Riggs had promptly asserted her belief that he was not in position to enjoy anything. He had come back to the post late in the fall, looking some years older and graver; he had been very ill at Jefferson Barracks, said letters from that point, while waiting to take out a party of recruits to the regiment; he had resumed duty without a word to anybody of the matters that had so suddenly called him East, but there was no need of telling: they knew all about it; at least they said and thought they did. Mrs. Riggs had had such complete accounts from Noel, and had received such a sweet letter from Miss Vincent in reply to the one she had written congratulating her upon her engagement to her (Mrs. Riggs's) "*favorite among all the officers*,"—and the colonel's, too. "She was so sorry—so painfully distressed—about Captain Lane," said Mrs. Riggs. "She never really cared for him. It was gratitude and propinquity, and pleasure in his attentions, that she mistook for love; but she never knew what love was until she met Gordon. They were to be married early in the spring, and would take only a brief tour, for he had to be at his station. She dreaded coming to the regiment, though she would follow Gordon to the end of the world if he said so, for she knew there were peopl's

who would blame her for breaking with Captain Lane as she had to; but she knew long before she did so that they could never be happy together. She had written to him, telling him all, long before he came East and they had that dreadful scene in which Mr. Noël had behaved with such perfect self-command and such excessive consideration for Captain Lane's feelings. Of course, as Gordon said, all possibility of reconciliation or future friendship between them was at an end unless Captain Lane humbly apologized. She had been mercifully spared hearing it; for the fearful expression of his face when they discovered him listening at the portière had caused her to faint away, and she only came to, Gordon said, in time to prevent his pitching him out of the window, so utterly was he tried. She was so thankful to have in Mrs. Riggs a friend who would not see Gordon wronged, and who could be counted on to deny any stories that poor Captain Lane in his disappointment might put in circulation."

But Lane never mentioned the subject. As for the letters to which she referred, they all followed him East in one bundle and were sent to her unopened; and she knew when she wrote to Mrs. Riggs that, though she might have "told him all," as she said, he never knew a word of it until his eyes and ears revealed the truth that wretched night in the library where his brief, sweet love-dream began and ended.

There were other matters wherein Mr. Noël himself was consulting Mrs. Riggs. He was now senior first lieutenant. Any accident of service might make him a captain, and then, if precedent were followed, "he might be ordered to join at once. Ordinarily, as she well knew, nothing would give him greater joy; but now—solely on Mabel's account—he hesitated. A friend at the War Department had said that, if Colonel Riggs would approve, a six months' leave to visit Europe, for the purpose of prosecuting his professional studies, might be obtained. Would she kindly, etc., etc."

There was no one to write or speak for Lane: only one side of the story was being told, and, though the men had had little else than contempt for Noël, they were of small account in moulding garrison opinions as compared with two or three determined women.

But no one saw the sorrowful, almost heart-broken, letter written by Mrs. Vincent to Lane. She had no words in which to speak of Mabel's conduct. They had both been deceived; and yet she implored him for forgiveness for her child. The world was all changed now. Their home remained to them, and her own little fortune, together with the wreck of Mr. Vincent's, but Regy had to go out into the world and seek to earn what he could. He had no idea of business. There was no one to step in and build up the old firm, and the executors had advised that everything be closed out. Mr. Clark's affairs had been left in lamentable confusion, but luckily he had nothing else to leave,—nothing, that is, but confusion and creditors. People were constantly importuning her for payment of his liabilities, claiming that they were contracted by the firm. Her lawyers absolutely forbade her listening to such demands. If she paid one-fourth of them she would have nothing left. Lane thought of his sacrificed Cheyenne property and the little fortune he had so freely offered up to save to the girl he loved

the home in which she had been reared. The very roof under which the girl had plighted her troth to him and then dishonored it for Noel—under which, day after day, she was now receiving, welcoming, caressing him—was practically rescued for her and her mother by the money of the man she had cast aside.

The wedding-cards came in April. It was to be a quiet affair, because of the death of Mr. Vincent within the year. Lane read the announcement in the *Army and Navy Journal*, and sat for a while, the paper dropping to the floor and his head upon his hands. Elsewhere in its columns he found a full account, written evidently by some one thoroughly well acquainted with all the parties, except perhaps the gallant groom.

When Lane's servant tiptoed in at reveille the next morning to prepare the bath and black the boots, he was surprised to find that officer sitting at his desk with his head pillowed in his arms. He had not been to bed, and did not know that reveille had sounded. Was he ill? Did he need the doctor? No. He had to sit up late over some letters and papers, and had finally fallen asleep there. All the same Dr. Gowen, happening into the hospital while Lane was visiting one of his men after sick-call, stopped, and keenly examined his face.

"I want you to go right to your quarters and stay there, Lane, for you've got a fever, and, I believe, mountain fever," were his immediate orders. "I'll be with you in a moment." It was only the beginning of what proved to be a trying illness of several weeks' duration. When Lane was able to sit up again, it was the recommendation of the post-surgeon and of his regimental commander that he be sent East on sick-leave for at least three months. And the first week of June found him at West Point: he had many old and warm friends there, and their companionship and cordiality cheered him greatly. One night, strolling back from parade to the broad piazza of the hotel, he saw the stage drive up from the landing and a number of visitors scurry up the steps in haste to escape the prying eyes of the older arrivals, who invariably thronged the south piazza at such times and curiously inspected the travel-stained and cinder-spotted faces of those whose ill luck it was to have to run that social gauntlet. There was something familiar in the face of a young lady following a portly matron into the hall, and when a moment later he came upon the massive frame of Mr. Amos Withers, registering himself, his wife, daughters, and Miss Marshall, of the Queen City, Lane knew at once that it was his friend of the dismal dinner of nearly a year ago. Later that evening he met her in the hall, and was surprised at the prompt and pleasant recognition which she gave him. It was not long before they were on the north piazza, watching that peerless view up the Hudson, and, finding that she had never been there before and was enthusiastic in her admiration of the scenery, Lane took pleasure in pointing out to her the various objects of interest that could be seen through the brilliant sheen of moonlight. And so, having made himself at once useful and entertaining, he finally went to his bed with a sensation of having passed rather a brighter evening than he had known in a long, long time.

On the following day Miss Marshall was in the hall, reading,

when he came out from breakfast. She was waiting, she said, for Mrs. Withers to come down. The nurse was dressing the children.

"I want to ask you something, Captain Lane. I saw Mrs. Vincent just before I left home, and had a little talk with her. She has always been very kind to me. Did you ever receive a letter she wrote to you three or four weeks ago?"

"I never did," said Lane. "Do you think that she did write to me?"

"I know she did. She told me so, and expressed great surprise that you had accorded her no answer. She felt very sure of your friendship, and she was at a loss to understand your silence. Although I had only met you once or twice before, I felt that I knew you so well that you could not refuse to answer a letter from so lovable a woman as she, and I deemed it my duty to let you know what she had told me. I am very glad now that I did so."

"Is she at home?" asked Lane, eagerly.

"She was when I left, but they were expecting to go to the mountains. Mrs. Noel seems to be drooping a little. The weather is very warm there already, as you know, and the doctor has advised that both ladies go up to Deer Park. Mrs. Noel doesn't wish to go, as it takes her so far from her husband; but, as he was able to get there quite frequently when they were there before, I see no reason why he should not be able to join them every week now."

"Was he there frequently when they were there before?" asked Lane, an old, dull pain gnawing at his heart.

"He was there three or four times to my knowledge during our stay, but of course his visits were very brief: he came generally Saturday and went away at midnight Sunday."

"I will go and telegraph to Mrs. Vincent. If need be, I will go and see her; and I thank you very much, Miss Marshall."

That evening he received a despatch from Mrs. Vincent in response to the one sent almost immediately after this conversation. "If possible, come here. I greatly desire to see you. Wire answer." What could it mean?

By the first train on the following morning he left for New York, and was far on his way to the Queen City when sunset came. Arriving there, he went first to the old hotel, and, after changing his dress and removing the stains of travel, for the first time since his memorable visit of October he mounted the broad stone steps and asked to see Mrs. Vincent. She came down almost instantly, and Lane was shocked to see how she had failed since their last meeting. Years seemed to have been added to her age; her hair was gray; the lines in her gentle, patient face had deepened. She entered, holding forth both hands, but when she looked into his eyes her lips quivered and she burst into tears. Lane half led, half supported her to a chair, and, drawing one to her side, spoke soothingly to her. For a few moments she could not speak, and when she did he checked her.

"Oh, you too have aged and suffered! and it is all our doing,—all our doing!" she moaned, as her tears burst forth anew.

"Never mind my crow's-feet and gray hairs, dear lady," he said.

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"It is high time I began to show signs of advancing age. Then, too, I am just up from a siege of mountain fever."

"Was that the reason you did not answer?" she presently asked.

"I never got your letter, Mrs. Vincent. When was it mailed?"

"About the 10th of May. I remember it well, because—it was just after Mabel and Captain Noel got back from their tour."

"Pardon me, but did you post it yourself?"

"No. The postman always takes my letters. I leave them on the little table in the vestibule."

"Where any one can see them?"

"Yes; but who would touch my letters?"

Lane did not know, of course. He was only certain that nothing from Mrs. Vincent had reached him during the past six months.

"Captain Lane," she said, at last, "I want you to tell me the truth. Just after Mabel's marriage I heard that a story was in circulation to the effect that it was your money that enabled Mr. Vincent to tide over the crisis in his affairs a year ago. It was even said that you had sold property at a loss to supply him with means; and some people in society are so cruel as to say that Mabel's trousseau was actually purchased with your money, because it had never been repaid. I know that Mr. Vincent often spoke of his obligation and gratitude to you. Tell me truly and frankly, Captain Lane: did you give my husband money? Is this story true?"

"I never gave Mr. Vincent a cent."

"Oh, I am so thankful! We have been the means of bringing such sorrow to you——"

"I beg you, make no reference to that, Mrs. Vincent. Neither your honored husband nor you have I ever thought in the least responsible. And as for this other matter, you have been misinformed."

"What cruel, reckless stories people tell! It hurt me terribly; and then when no answer came to my letter I felt that probably there was something in it, and that you were hiding the truth from me. Mabel heard it too; but she said that Captain Noel investigated it at once and found that it was utterly false. I could not be satisfied until I had your own assurance."

"And now you have it," he said, with a smile that shone on his worn face and beamed about his deep-set eyes like sunshine after April showers. "You are going to be advised now, are you not, and seek change and rest in the mountains?"

"We meant to go this week; but Mrs. Paterson, of Philadelphia, is urging us to spend the summer with her at the sea-shore, where she has a roomy cottage. She is a cousin of Captain Noel's, and was an intimate friend of Mabel's at school. That was where my daughter first heard of him. Oh, I wish—I wish——"

And here once more Mrs. Vincent's tears poured forth, and it was some time before she could control herself.

At last the captain felt that he must go. It was now his purpose to leave town as soon as he could attend to one or two matters of business.

"Shall I not see you again?" she asked, as he rose to take his leave.

"I fear not," he answered. "There is nothing to require more

than an hour or two of attention here, and then I shall seek a cooler spot for a few weeks' rest, then back to the regiment."

"But we—that is, I heard you had three months' sick-leave."

"Very true; but I only need one, and I am best with my troop."

"Tell me," she asked: "is it true that there is trouble brewing again among the Indians,—at San Carlos, isn't it?"

"There seems to be bad blood among them, and no doubt disaffection; but if sufficient troops are sent to the Agency and to scout around the reservation they can be held in check."

"But I have been told that you have too small a force to watch them. I wish you were not going back; but it is like you, Captain Lane."

And so they parted. He saw and heard and asked nothing of his whilom *fiancée*. He did not wish to see her husband. He meant to have left town that very evening, after brief consultation with a real-estate agent whom he had had occasion to employ in his service; but even as he was stowing his travelling—"kit" in a roomy leather bag there came a knock at his door and there entered a man in plain civilian dress, who motioned the bell-boy to clear out, and then held forth a photograph:

"Captain Lane, is that your man Taintor?"

"That is certainly like the man," was Lane's answer, after careful inspection. "Have you got him?"

"No, sir. We had him, and took Captain Noel to see him, and the captain said there was some mistake. He wears his hair and beard different now; but we know where he is,—at least, where he was up to yesterday. He left his lodgings at noon, and took a bag with him, as though he meant to be away a few days. He does copying and type-writing, and manages to get along and support a good-looking young woman who passes as his wife. *That's* what we think brought him back here last winter."

"Why didn't you take some of the recruiting-party to see him? They could identify him."

"All the old men that were with you are gone, sir. It's a new lot entirely. They said the sergeant couldn't get along with the captain at all, and they were all sent away."

"Where's the woman who kept the lodging-house for the party?"

"She's gone too, sir. They moved away last winter because Captain Noel gave the contract to another party in a different part of the town. We let the thing slide for quite a while; but when the Chief heard that you had arrived in town he thought he'd shadow the fellow until you could see him, but he had skipped. Was there any way he could have heard you were coming?"

"No. I telegraphed from West Point to Mrs. Vincent. She was the only one who knew."

"Beg pardon, sir, but isn't that Captain Noel's mother-in-law? The captain lives there, I think."

Lane turned sharply and studied the man's face. A question was at his very tongue's end,—“You do not suppose *he* could have given warning?”—but he stifled it, his lips compressing tight.

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"If you think he has gone because of my coming, I will leave on the late train, as I purposed, and you can wire to me when he returns. Then keep him shadowed until I get here."

And with this understanding they parted, Lane going at once to a cool resort on one of the great lakes. Four days later came the despatch he looked for, and, accompanied by two detectives, Lane knocked at the indicated door-way one bright, sunshiny afternoon within forty-eight hours thereafter.

A comely young woman opened the door just a few inches and inquired what was wanted. "Mr. Graves was not at home." He certainly would not have been in a minute more, for a man swung out of the third-story window, and, going hand by hand down the convenient lightning-rod, dropped into the arms of a waiting officer, and that night the forger and deserter spent behind the bars in the Central Station. The identification was complete.

Lane was to appear and make formal charge against him the following morning. Going down to an early breakfast, he picked up one of the great dailies at the news-stand, and, after taking his seat at table and ordering a light repast, he opened the still moist sheet. The first glance at the head-lines was enough to start him to his feet. "Indian Outbreak." "The Apaches on the War-Path." "Murder of Agent Curtis at San Carlos." "Massacre of a Stage-Load of Passengers." "Captain Rawlins, Eleventh Cavalry, a victim." "Horrible Atrocities." "Troops in Pursuit."

It was the old, old story briefly told. Warnings disregarded; official reports of the neighboring troop-commanders pooh-poohed and pigeon-holed by functionaries of the Indian Bureau; a sudden, startling rush of one body upon the agent and his helpless family; a simultaneous dash from the other end of the reservation upon the scattered ranches in the valley; a stage-coach ambushed; a valued old soldier butchered in cold blood. There was no more thought of breakfast for Lane. He hurried to the telegraph-office, thence to the police-station, thence to an attorney whom he was advised to employ, and by noon he was whirling westward. "No laggard he" when the war-cry rang along the blazing border.

XIII.

The *Morning Chronicle*, a most valuable sheet in its way, in its Sunday edition contained the following interesting item:

"No event in social circles has eclipsed of late the banquet given at the club last night in honor of Captain Gordon Noel, of the Eleventh Cavalry, on the eve of his departure to take command of his troop, now hastening to the scene of Indian hostilities in Arizona. As is well known to our citizens, the news of the murderous outbreak at the reservation was no sooner received than this gallant officer applied instantly to be relieved from his present duties in our midst and ordered to join his comrades in the field, that he might share with them the perils of this savage warfare.

"Covers were laid for forty. The table was decorated with flowers and glistened with plate and crystal. The most conspicuous device was

the crossed sabres of the cavalry, with the number 11 and the letter K, that being the designation of the captain's company. His honor Mayor Jenness presided, and the Hon. Amos Withers faced him at the other end of the banquet-board. The speech of the evening was made by Mayor Jenness in toasting 'our gallant guest,' which was drunk standing and with all honors. We have room only for a brief summary of his remarks. Alluding to the previous distinguished services of the captain, he said that 'In every Territory of our broad West his sabre has flashed in the defence of the weak against the strong, the poor settler against the powerful and numerous savage tribes too often backed by official influence at Washington. And now, while cheeks were blanching and hearts were still stricken by the dread news of the butcheries and rapine which marked the Indians' flight, when others shrank from such perilous work, where was the man who could suppress the fervent admiration with which he heard that there was one soldier who lost no time in demanding relief from duty here, that he might speed to the head of the gallant fellows already in the field, who had followed him in many a stirring charge and through all "the current of many a heady fight;" whose hearts would leap for joy at sight of their beloved leader's face,—the man who never yet had failed them, the man who never yet had faltered in his duty, the man whose sword was never drawn without reason, never sheathed without honor,—our soldier guest, Captain Gordon Noel?"

"Much affected, it was some minutes before the captain could respond. The modesty of the true soldier restrained his eloquence. 'He knew not how to thank them for this most flattering testimony of their confidence and regard; he far from deserved the lavish praise of their honored chairman. If in the past he had succeeded in winning their esteem, all the more would he try to merit it now. No soldier could remain in security when such desperate deeds called his comrades to the fray; and as he had ever shared their dangers in the old days, so must he share them now. His heart, his home, his bride, to part from whom was bitter trial, he left with them to guard and cherish. Duty called him to the front, and with to-morrow's sun he would be on his way. But, if it pleased God to bear him safely through, he would return to them, to greet and grasp each friendly hand again, and meantime to prove himself worthy the high honor they had done him.'

"There was hardly a dry eye at the table when the gallant soldier finished his few remarks and then took his seat.

"Besides winning the heart and hand of one of the loveliest of the Queen City's daughters, the captain has made hosts of friends in our midst, and we predict that when the records of the campaign are written no name will shine with brighter lustre than that of Gordon Noel."

This doubtless was delightful reading to Noel and to Noel's relatives. Doubtless, too, it was some comfort to poor Mabel as she lay pale, anxious, sore at heart on the following day, while her husband and lover—as he undoubtedly was—sped westward with the fast express. But there was a great deal about the *Chronicle's* account that would have elicited something more than a broad grin from officers who knew Noel well.

An entire week had elapsed from the time that the first tidings were received to the moment when he finally and most reluctantly left the Queen City. The first intimation was enough to start Captain Lane, despite the fact that his health was far from restored and that he was yet by no means strong. He felt confident that the Indians would be joined by some of the Chiricahuas, and that the campaign would be fierce and stubborn. Telegraphing to the regimental adjutant and the general commanding the department that he intended to start at once, and asking to be notified *en route* where he could most speedily join the troop, he was on his way within six hours.

That very night, although no mention was made of this in the *Chronicle* account, Captain Noel received a despatch from the Adjutant-General's Office at Washington briefly to this effect: "You become Captain of K Company, *vice* Rawlins, murdered by Apaches. Hold yourself in readiness to turn over the rendezvous and join your regiment without delay." No news could have been more unwelcome. Despite his many faults, there was no question that Gordon Noel was very much in love with his wife; but he never had been in love with the active part of his profession. That night he telegraphed to relatives who had stood by him in the past, and wrote urgent and pleading letters informing them that his wife's health was in so delicate a state that if he were compelled at this moment to leave her and to go upon perilous duty in the Apache country there was no telling what might be the effect upon her. If a possible thing, he urged that there should be a delay of a fortnight. He calculated that by that time the Indians would either be safe across the Mexican border or whipped back to the reservation; then he could go out and join with a flourish of trumpets and no possible danger. But a new king reigned in the War Department, who knew Joseph rather than knew him not. In some way the honorable Secretary had become acquainted with the previous history of Captain Noel's campaign services, and, though the influential gentlemen referred to made prompt and eloquent appeal, they were met by courteous but positive denial. "Every man who was worth his salt," said the Secretary, "should be with his regiment now." An officer was designated to proceed at once to the Queen City and take over Noel's rendezvous and property, and peremptory orders were sent to him to start without delay and to notify the department by telegraph of the date of his departure,—a most unusual and stringent proceeding. This correspondence Noel never mentioned to anybody at the time, and it was known only to the official records for some time afterwards. As soon as he found that go he must, he dictated to his clerk a letter in which, gallant soldier that he was, he informed the Adjutant-General that the news from Arizona had now convinced him that an outbreak of alarming dimensions had taken place, and he begged that he might be relieved as at his own request and permitted to join his comrades in the field. To this no reply was sent, as the order directing him to proceed had already been issued. Perhaps a grim smile played about the moustached lips of that functionary when he read this spirited epistle.

Noel left the Queen City a hero in the eyes of the populace. He

was just six days behind Lane, of whose movements the Queen City had no information whatever.

And now came an odd piece of luck,—a slip in the fortunes of war. The cavalry stationed in Arizona were so far from the reservation at the time that they had long and difficult marches to make. Only two or three troops that happened to be along the line of the railway reached the mountains neighboring San Carlos in time to quickly take the trail of the hostiles. Except the one little troop of cavalry on duty at the reservation, none of the horsemen in Arizona had as yet come in actual conflict with the renegades, and, oddly enough, it was the Eleventh that first met and struck them. Old Riggs himself had not taken the field, but the battalion from head-quarters had been whirled westward along the railway and actually reached the pass through the Chiricahua Range before the Indians. Expecting just such a possibility, these wary campaigners had their scouts far in advance of the main body, and prompt warning was given, so that only the rear-guard of the Indians was reached by the eager cavalymen; the bulk of the Apaches turned eastward and swept down like ravening wolves upon the defenceless settlers in the San Simon Valley, burning, murdering, pillaging as they went, full fifty miles a day, while their pursuers trailed helplessly behind. When they had succeeded in crossing the railway most of their number were mounted on fresh horses, and the section-hands, who saw them from afar off, telegraphed from the nearest station that they had with them six or eight women and children whose husbands and fathers doubtless lay weltering in their blood along the route. Full seven days now had they been dodging through the mountains and swooping down upon the ranchmen, and so skilfully had they eluded their pursuers and defeated their combinations that now they had a commanding lead and actually nothing between them and the Mexican frontier,—nothing in Arizona, that is to say. But look just across the border. There, spurring steadily southwestward until halted for the night in San Simon Pass, comes a little troop of cavalry, not more than thirty-five in number. All day long since earliest dawn had they ridden across the burning sands of a desert region; lips, nostrils, eyelids smarting with alkali-dust, throats parched with thirst, temples throbbing with the intense heat; several men and horses used up and left behind were now slowly plodding back towards the railway. Look at the letter one of those leaders wears upon his worn old scouting-hat,—D. Yes, it is the “Devil’s own D’s,” and Lane is at their head.

At the moment of the outbreak, both companies from Graham, K and D, or strong detachments from both, were scouting through the country,—one through the northern Peloncillo Range, the other far up among the head-waters of the Gila. Not a word did they hear of the trouble until it was several days old; then D Troop was amazed by the sudden appearance of their captain in their midst,—Lane, whom they supposed to be on sick-leave far in the distant East. It was then for the first time they learned how their comrades of K Troop had lost their popular old commander, and that the great outbreak had occurred at San Carlos. Stopping only long enough to cram their pouches with ammunition and to draw more rations, the troop hastened away towards

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the railroad by way of Graham, and at the station, just at dawn, Lane sent a brief despatch to the commanding general saying that he was pushing with all speed to head the Indians off *via* San Simon Pass. He had then forty-five men and horses, in fair condition. K Troop would reach Graham that evening, and he urged that they be sent at once to reinforce him. This despatch "the Chief" received with an emphatic slap of his thigh and an expression of delight: "Bless that fellow Lane! he is always in the nick of time. I had not hoped for an instant that either D or K would be available, and now look," he said to his aide-de-camp, "he has started for San Simon Pass, and will probably throw himself across their front. Only I wish he had more men."

"Shall I wire to Graham to have K rush after him, sir?"

"Yes. Order them to start the instant they can refit, and not to take more than an hour in doing that. They have been having easy work on their scout,—probably taking it leisurely all the time; they ought to be in first-rate trim. D, on the contrary, has been making long and rapid marches to get down from the Upper Gila. Where was K at last accounts?"

"Couriers had gone to the Upper Peloncillo for them several days ago, and, as Lane says, they are expected at Graham this evening. Lane, himself, rode after his own men two hours after he got to the post from the East, and Noel, who is K's new captain, is due at Graham Station to-night."

"Then send him orders to lead his troop instantly, follow and support Lane. Tell him not to lose a moment on the way. Everything may depend upon his promptness and zeal."

And so it happened that when Captain Noel stepped from the train that afternoon at the old station the telegraph messenger came forward to meet him, touching his cap and saying, "This despatch has been awaiting you, sir, since eleven o'clock this morning. I have just had a despatch from the post, and K Troop got in two hours ago and is already starting. Lieutenant Mason says an orderly is coming ahead with a horse and the captain's field-kit. Shall I wire for anything else?"

Noel opened the despatch which had been handed him, and read it with an expression that plainly indicated perturbation, if not dismay. He had not been in saddle for an entire year.

"Why, I must go out to the post!" he said to the operator. "I am not at all ready to take the field. Let them know that I have arrived, and will come out there without delay. Better have the troop unsaddled and wait for my coming."

"Will the captain pardon me?" said the operator; "the orders from the Department commander that went through this morning were that the troop should not take more than an hour in refitting at the post and should start at once. I thought I could see them coming over the divide just as the whistle blew."

The captain's face gave no sign of enthusiasm as he received this news. He was still pondering over the contents of his despatch from the commanding general,—its tone was so like that of his order from

the War Department,—so utterly unlike what his admiring circle of relatives and friends would have expected. Stepping into the telegraph-office, he took some blanks and strove to compose a despatch that would convince the general that he was wild with eagerness to ride all night to the support of Lane, and yet that would explain how absolutely necessary it was that he should first go out to the post. But the Fates were against him. Even as he was gnawing the pencil and cudgelling his brains, the operator called out,—

"Here come some of 'em now, sir."

And, looking nervously from the window, Noel saw three horsemen galloping in to the station. Foremost came a lieutenant of infantry, who sprang to the ground and tossed the reins to his orderly the instant he neared the platform. One of the men had a led horse, completely equipped for the field, with blankets, saddle-bags, carbine, canteen, and haversack; and Noel's quick intuition left him no room to believe that the steed was intended for any one but him.

The infantryman came bounding in: "Is this Captain Noel? I am Mr. Renshaw, post-adjutant, sir, and I had hoped to get here in time to meet you on your arrival, but we were all busy getting the troop ready. You've got your orders, sir, haven't you? My God! captain, can't you wire to the fort and beg the major to let me go with you? I'll be your slave for a lifetime. I've never had a chance to do a bit of real campaigning yet, and no man could ask a bullier chance than this. Excuse me, sir, I know you want to get right into scouting rig,—Mr. Mason said his 'extras' would fit you exactly,—but if you could take me along—you're bound to get there just in time for the thick of it." And the gallant little fellow looked, all eagerness, into Noel's unresponsive face. What wouldn't the hero of the Queen City Club have given to turn the whole thing over to this ambitious young soldier and let him take his chances of "glory or the grave"!

"Very thoughtful of you all, I'm sure, to think of sending horse and kit here for me, but I really ought to go out to the post. There are things I must attend to. You see, I left the instant I could induce them to relieve me, and there was no time to make preparations."

"But—you can't have heard, captain: your troop will be here in ten minutes. Captain Lane by this time is past Pyramid Mountain, and will strike them early in the morning. There won't be any time to go out to the post: you've got to ride at trot or gallop most of the night as it is—"

"Captain Noel, pardon me, sir," interposed the operator. "The general is in the office at Wilcox Station. He wants to know if you have started from here."

"Tell him the troop isn't here yet. I'm waiting for it."

"Yonder comes the troop, sir," called out Mr. Renshaw, who had run to the door. "Now let me help you off with your 'cits.' Bring that canvas bag in here, orderly."

Three minutes brought a message from "the Chief": "Lose not a moment on the way. Report here by wire the arrival of your troop and the moment you start. Behind time now."

Poor Noel! There was no surgeon to certify that his pallid cheeks

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were due to impaired heart-action, no senatorial cousin to beg for staff duty, no Mrs. Riggs to interpose. He had just time to send a despatch to Mabel announcing that he took the field at the head of his troop at once, another (collect) to Amos Withers, Esq., of similar import, and one to the general, saying that at 4.45 they were just on the point of starting, when the troop, fifty strong and in splendid trim, came trotting in, and Mr. Mason grimly saluted his new captain and fell back to the command of the first platoon.

"Noel to the Front!" was the *Chronicle's* head-line on the following morning far away in the Queen City.

XIV.

Not an instant too soon, although he has ridden hard since earliest dawn, has Lane reached the rocky pass. North and south the Peloncillos are shrouded in the gloom of coming night, and all over the arid plain to the eastward darkness has settled down. In previous scouts he has learned the country well, and he knows just where to turn for "tanks" of cool water for horses, mules, and men,—the cavalry order of precedence when creature comforts are to be doled out. He knows just where to conceal his little force in the recesses of the rocks and let them build tiny fires and make their coffee and then get such rest as is possible before the coming day; but there is no rest for him. Taking two veteran soldiers with him, and leaving the troop to the command of his lieutenant, an enthusiastic young soldier only a year out of the cadet gray, the captain rides westward through the gloaming. He must determine at once whether the Indians are coming towards the pass by which the San Simon makes its burst through the range, or whether, having made wide *détour* around the little post at Bowie among the Chiricahua Mountains, they are now heading southward again and taking the shortest line to the border before seeking to regain once more their old trail along the San Bernardino. How often have their war-parties gone to and fro along those rocky banks, unmolested, unpursued!

And now, secure in the belief that they have thrown all the cavalry far to the rear in the "stern-chase" which no Apache dreads, well knowing how easily he can distance his hampered pursuers, the renegades, joined by a gang of the utterly "unreconstructed" Chiricahuas, are taking things easily and making raids on the helpless ranches that lie to the right or left of their line of march. Fortunately for the records, these are few in number; had there been dozens more they would only have served to swell the list of butchered men, of plundered ranches, of burning stacks and corrals, of women and children borne off to be the sport of their leisure hours when once secure in the fastnesses of the Sierra Madres far south of the line. Death could not too soon come to the relief of these poor creatures, and Lane and all his men had been spurred to the utmost effort by the story of the railway-hands that they had plainly seen several women and children bound to the spare animals the renegades drove along across the iron track.

Among the passengers in the pillaged stage-coach were the wife and daughter of an Indian agent, who had only recently come to this arid Territory and knew little of the ways of its indigenous people. Nothing had since been seen or heard of them. Captain Rawlins and two soldiers going up as witnesses before a court-martial at Grant were found hacked almost beyond recognition, and the driver too, who seemed to have crawled out among the rocks to die. Verily the Apaches had good reason to revel in their success! They had hoodwinked the Bureau, dodged the cavalry, plundered right and left until they were rich with spoil, and now, well to the south of the railway, with a choice of either east or west side of the range, their main body and prisoners are halted to rest the animals, while miles to the rear their faithful vedettes keep watch against pursuers, and miles out to the west the most active young warriors are crying havoc at the ranch of Tres Hermanos. It is the red glare of the flame towards the sunset horizon that tells Lane the Apaches cannot be far away. The instant he and his comrades issue from the gorge and peer cautiously to the right and left, not only do they see the blaze across the wide valley, but northward, not more than half a mile away, there rises upon the night-wind a sound that they cannot mistake,—the war-chant of the Chiricahuas.

"Thank God," cries Lane, "we are here ahead of them!"

Half an hour's reconnoissance reveals to him their position. Far up among the boulders of the range, where pursuing horsemen cannot rush upon them in the night, they have made their bivouac, and are having a revel and feast while awaiting the return of the raiders or news from the rear that they must be moving. The range is rugged and precipitous north of the gorge; cavalry cannot penetrate it; but Lane's plan is quickly laid. He will let his men sleep until two o'clock, keeping only three sentries on the lookout, one of them mounted and west of the gorge to give warning should the Indians move during the night. Then, leaving the horses concealed among the rocks south of the stream, with two men to guard them, he will lead his company up the heights and as close as possible to the Apache camp, lie in hiding until it is light enough to distinguish objects, then dash down into their midst, rescue the prisoners in the panic and confusion that he knows will result from the sudden attack, send them back as rapidly as possible, guided by three or four men, to where his horses are corralled, while he and his little band interpose between them and any rally the Apaches may make.

Knowing well that they are armed with magazine rifles and supplied by a paternal Bureau with abundant ammunition, knowing that they outnumber him three to one, knowing that by sunrise the whole tribe will have reassembled and must infallibly detect the pitiful weakness of his own force, it is a desperate chance to take; but it is the only one—absolutely the only one—to save those tortured, agonized women, those terror-stricken little ones, from a fate more awful than words can portray.

By eight or nine in the morning, he argues, K Troop must certainly reach him; he knows them to be fresh and strong, he knows that they have had only short and easy marches and therefore can easily come

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ahead all night long and be rounding the Pyramid Spur by daybreak. He knows Mason well, and can count on that young officer's doing his "level best" to support him. Alas! he does not know that Mason is compelled by this time to fall back to second place, and that the last man on whom he can possibly count "in a pinch" is now in command of the looked-for troop.

The night wears on without alarm. Well-nigh exhausted, Lane has thrown himself at the foot of a tree to catch what sleep he may, and he feels as though he had not closed his eyes when Corporal Sheabends over him to say it is two o'clock. Noiselessly the men are aroused; silently they roll out of their blankets, and, obedient to the low-toned "fall in" of the first sergeant, seize their arms and take their place in line. There Lane briefly explains the situation; tells them of the position of the Apache bivouac; details Corporal Riley and four men to search for, secure, and hie away with the prisoners, and orders all the rest to fight like the devil to drive the Apaches helter-skelter into the rocks. "Let not one word be said nor a trigger pulled until we are right among them. Wait for my command, unless we are detected and fired on. If we are, blaze away at once; but never stop your rush: get right in among them. Let Riley and his men make instant search, be sure they leave neither woman nor child behind, and start them back here. The rest of us will fall back slowly, keeping between them and the Apaches all the time. Never let them get near those prisoners. That is the main object of our attack. Once back here with the horses, we can pick out places in the rocks from which we can stand the Apaches off until K Troop comes. Rest assured Lieutenant Mason and his men will be along by eight or nine; and it cannot be that the cavalry now pursuing the Apaches from the north will be more than a few hours behind. Now, do you understand? for there will be no chance of orders up there. Leave your canteens; leave anything that will hinder or rattle. Those of you who have on spurs, take them off. Those of you who have Tonto or Apache moccasins, take off your top boots and put them on; they are all the better for going up these hill-sides. Now get your coffee, men; make no noise, light no additional fires, and be ready to move in twenty minutes."

Then he pencils this brief note:

"Commanding Officer Troop K, Eleventh Cavalry:

"We have headed the Apaches, and will attack their camp the instant it is light enough to see, rescue their captives, then fall back here to the gorge of the San Simon. They far outnumber us, and you cannot reach us too soon. I count upon your being here by eight in the morning, and hope with your aid to hold the enemy until Greene's command arrives. Then we ought to capture the whole band. Do not fail me.

"FREDERICK LANE,

"Captain Eleventh Cavalry."

This he gives to Sergeant Luce with orders to ride back on the trail until he meets K Troop and deliver it to Lieutenant Mason or whoever is in command; and in half an hour Luce is away.

And now, just as the dawn is breaking and a faint pallid light is stealing through the tops along the rocky range, there come creeping slowly, noiselessly along the slope a score of shadowy forms, crouching from boulder to boulder, from tree to tree. Not a word is spoken, save now and then a whispered caution. Foremost, carbine in hand, is the captain, now halting a moment to give some signal to those nearest him, now peering ahead over the rocks that bar the way. At last he reaches a point where, looking down the dark and rugged hill-side before him, he sees something which causes him to unsling the case in which his field-glasses are carried, to gaze thither long and fixedly. With all eyes upon their leader, the men wait and listen: some cautiously try the hammers of their carbines and loosen a few cartridges in the loops of their prairie-belts. A signal from Lane brings Mr. Royce, the young second lieutenant, to his side. It is the boy's first experience of the kind, and his heart is thumping, but he means to be one of the foremost in the charge when the time comes. Watching closely, the nearest men can see that the captain is pointing out some object nearer at hand than they supposed, and the first sergeant, crouching to a neighboring rock, looks cautiously over, and then eagerly motions to others to join him.

The Apache hiding-place is not three hundred yards away.

Down the mountain-side to the west and up the range to the north their sentries keep vigilant guard against surprise; but what man of their number dreams for an instant that on the south, between them and the Mexican line, there is now closing in to the attack a little troop of veteran campaigners, led by a man whom they have learned to dread before now? Invisible from the valley below or the heights up the range, their smouldering fires can be plainly seen from where Lane and his men are now concealed. But nothing else can be distinguished.

Far over on the western side of the valley the faint red glow tells where lie the ruins of the ranch their young warriors have destroyed, and any moment now their exultant yells may be heard as they come scampering back to camp after a night of deviltry, and then everybody will be up and moving off and well on the way southward before the sun gets over the crest. Lane knows he must make his dash before they can return. There would be little hope of rescue for the poor souls lying there bound and helpless, with all those fierce young fighters close at hand.

The word is passed among the men: "Follow closely, but look well to your footing. Dislodge no stones." Then, slowly and stealthily as before, on they go,—this time down the hill towards the faint lights of the Indian bivouac. A hundred yards more, and Lane holds up his hand, a signal to halt; and here he gives Mr. Royce a few instructions in a low tone. The youngster nods his head and mutters to several of the men as he passes, "Follow me." They disappear among the rocks and trees to the right, and it is evident that they mean to work around to the east of the bivouac, so as to partially encircle them. Little by little the wan light grows brighter, and, close at hand, objects far more distinct. An Indian is just passing in front of the nearest blaze, and is lost in the gloom among the stunted trees. One

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or two forms are moving about, but they can only dimly be distinguished. Lane argues, however, that they are getting ready to move, and no time is to be lost.

"Spread out now," is the order, "well to the right and left, and move forward. Be very careful." And once more they resume their cat-like advance. Nearer and nearer they creep upon the unsuspecting foe, and soon many a form of sleeping Apache can be made out, lying around in the grassy basin in which they are hiding for the night. Lane motions to Corporal Riley to come close to his side: "I can see nothing that looks like prisoners: they must be among the trees there, where that farthest fire is burning. Keep close to me with your men. Pass the word to the right, there. All ready."

And now they are so near the Indians that the voices of one or two squaws can be heard chatting in low tones; then the feeble wail of an infant is for a moment brought to their straining ears; then far out over the level valley to the west there is a sound that causes Lane's blood to tingle,—faint, distant, but unmistakable,—a chorus of Apache yells. The raiders are coming back: it is time to strike the blow. Now or never, seems to be the word as the men glance at their leader and then into each other's faces.

"Forward! no shot, no sound, till they see us; then cheer like mad as you charge! Come on, men!"

Quickly now following his lead, they go leaping down the hill-side. Thirty—fifty yards without mishap or discovery. Sixty, and still no sound from the defence; then a sudden stumble, the rattle of a carbine sliding down the rocks, a muttered execration; then a shrill, piercing scream from the midst of the bivouac; then—

"Charge!"

In they go!—the "Devil's own D's." The still air rings with their wild hurrahs and the crash of their carbines. The flame-jets light up the savage scene and show squaws and screaming children rushing for shelter among the rocks; Apache warriors springing from the ground, some manfully facing the rush of the foe, others fleeing like women down the hill-side. Never halting an instant, the soldiers dash through the camp, driving the dusky occupants helter-skelter. Lane finds himself confronted one instant by a savage warrior whose eyes gleam like tiger's under the thatch of coarse black hair, and whose teeth gnash in fury as he tries to force a fresh cartridge into his breech-loader. No time for Lane to reload. He clubs his carbine, and the hammer comes crashing down on the Indian's skull just as Corporal Riley drives a bullet through his heart.

"Look to the captives, man!" shouts Lane. "Don't follow me! Drive them! drive them, Royce!" are his ringing orders, as he himself dashes on past the fires and into the feeble morning light beyond.

Bang! bang! the carbines are ringing through the rocks and trees; cheer upon cheer goes up from the little command, mingled with Indian yells and the screams of the terrified children.

"Riley's got 'em, sir," he hears his boy-trumpeter call. "Some of 'em, anyhow. There's two white women."

"Never mind, lad," he answers. "Don't sound the recall till I tell you."

And again his ringing voice is heard among the tumult: "Forward! forward! drive them! keep them on the run, men!"

And so for five minutes longer, firing whenever a savage head appears, inflicting and receiving many a savage blow, but still victoriously forcing their way onward, the little band follow their leader down the rocks until apparently not an Apache is left in the immediate neighborhood of the old camp. Then at last the trumpet peals out its signal-recall.

And slowly and steadily, watchfully guarding against the possibility of leaving some wounded comrade among the rocks, the little command finally gathers once more around the fires in the camp.

Riley and his men have disappeared. A shout from up the rocks in the well-known Irish voice gives the glad intelligence that he has brought with him all the prisoners he could find in camp.

"There are three women, sir, and two little children,—two girls; they're so frightened that I can hardly find out much from them, but they say there was no more left."

"Very well, then. Now, men, open out right and left, and fall back very slowly. Sergeant, take six of the men and move up so as to be close to Riley in case they attack from the flank. Are we all here? Are any wounded or hurt?" He asks the question with a little stream of blood trickling down from his left temple, but of which he seems perfectly unaware: either an arrow or a bullet has torn the skin and made quite a furrow through the hair.

"Murphy, sir," says one of the men, "is shot through the arm, and Lathrop has got a bullet in the leg; but they're only flesh-wounds: they're lying here just back of us."

Lane turns about, and finds two of his men looking a little pale, but perfectly plucky and self-possessed. "We'll get you along all right, men," he says; "don't worry.—Now, lads, turn about every ten or fifteen steps, and see that they don't get close upon you. Look well to the left."

Then slowly they fall back towards the pass. Every now and then a shot comes whizzing by, as the Apaches regain courage and creep up to their abandoned camp. But not until they are well back over the ridge, and Riley and his little party, fairly carrying their rescued captives, are nearly out of harm's way, do the scattered warriors begin to realize how few in number their assailants must be. Rallying shouts can be heard among the rocks, and then there come the thunder of hoofs out on the plain below and the answering yells of the returning raiders.

"Run to Corporal Riley and tell him to make all the haste he can," Lane orders his trumpeter. "Tell him to get back to the horses, and then, as soon as he has left his women in a safe place there, to throw up stone shelters wherever it is possible.—Royce, you look out for this front. I will go to the left. If any of your men are hit, have them picked up and moved rapidly to the rear; of course we can't leave any wounded to fall into their hands; but, where possible, keep

your men under cover ; and keep under yourself, sir : don't let me see you exposing yourself unnecessarily, as I did a while ago."

And once again the retreat is resumed. Lane looks anxiously among the rocks down the hill to his left, every instant expecting to see the young braves hurrying to the assault. But now, as though in obedience to the signals of some leader, the Apaches cease their pursuit. Lane well knows that the matter is not yet concluded, but is thankful for the respite. Still warily his little force continues the withdrawal, and, without further molestation, reaches the gorge of the San Simon, and soon comes in sight of the dip among the rocks where the horses are still hidden. Here, too, Corporal Riley and his men are busily at work heaping up little breastworks of rock, and Lane directs that while the wounded—there are three now—are carried down to where the rescued women and children are lying, the other men fall to and help. In five minutes there are over a score of them at work, and not one instant too soon. Corporal Donnelly, who has been posted, mounted, at the western entrance to the defile, comes clattering in to say that at least a hundred Indians are swarming down the ridge.

And now the fight that opens is one in which the odds are greatly against the defenders. Lane has just time to climb to the height on the east and take one long look with his glasses over the flats beyond the pass, praying for a sight of a dust-cloud towards the Pyramid Spur, when with simultaneous crash of musketry and chorus of yells the Apaches come sweeping down to the attack.

XV.

Meantime, where are the looked-for supports? Lane, with wearied horses, had made the march from the railway-station to the pass in a little over fourteen hours. It was 5.30 when he started and 8.15 when he unsaddled among the rocks. He had come through the blazing sunshine of the long June day ; sometimes at the trot, sometimes at the lope, oftentimes dismounting and leading when crossing ridges or ravines. He was still pale and weak from his long illness, and suffering from a sorrow that had robbed him of all the buoyancy he had ever possessed. But the sense of duty was as strong as ever, and the soldier-spirit triumphed over the ills of the flesh.

Noel, starting at 4.45 P.M., with horses and men fresh and eager, with a guide who knew every inch of the way, and the bright starlight to cheer his comrades, could reasonably be expected to cover the same ground in the same time ; every old cavalryman knows that horses travel better by night than by day. By good rights he and his men should be at the pass at least an hour before the time set by Lane. It was only a week before that the captain had declared at the "Queen City" that he had never felt so "fit" in his life and a campaign would just suit him. Things seemed to have a different color, however, as he watched the going down of the sun behind the distant Peloncillos. The words of the young infantry adjutant kept recurring to him, and he knew of old that when Lane started after Indians he was "dead sure to get 'em," as Mr. Mason was good enough to remind him.

Twice before sunset the guide had ventured to suggest a quicker gait, but Noel refused, saying that he did not mean to get his horses to the scene worn out and unfit for pursuit. Mr. Mason, who heard this, begged to remind the captain that pursuit was not the object: they were expected to get there in time to help Lane head off the attempt at further flight, and to hold the Apaches, wherever met, until the pursuing force could reach them from the north and hem them in. Noel ranked Mason only a few files and knew well that all the regiment would side with his subaltern: so he was forced to a show of cordiality and consideration. He rode by the lieutenant's side, assuring him of the sense of strength it gave him to have with him a man of such experience. "For your sake, Mason, I wish I had been twelve hours later, so that you could have had the glory of this thing to yourself; but you know I couldn't stand it. I had to pull wires like sin to get relieved, as it was. Old Hudson, the head of the recruiting-service, just swore he wouldn't let me go, because I had had good luck in the class and number of the recruits I sent him. Personally, too, I'm in no shape to ride. See how fat I've grown?"

Mason saw, but said a fifty-mile ride ought not to stagger any cavalryman, hard or soft, and made no reply whatever to the captain's account of how he succeeded in getting relieved. He didn't believe a word of it.

Night came on and found them still marching at steady walk. Halts for rest, too, had been frequently ordered, and at last Mason could stand it no longer. After repeated looks at his watch, he had burst out with an earnest appeal:

"Captain Noel, we'll never get there in time at this rate. Surely, sir, the orders you got from the general must be different from those that came to the post. *They* said, make all speed, lose not a moment. Did not yours say so too?"

"The general knew very well that I had marched cavalry too often not to understand just how to get there in time," was Noel's stately reply; and, though chafing inwardly, Mason was compelled to silence. Ten o'clock came, and still it was no better. Then both the lieutenant and the guide, after a moment's consultation during a rest, approached the captain and begged him to increase the gait; and when they mounted, the command did, for a while, move on at a jog, which Mason would fain have increased to the lope, but Noel interposed. Midnight, and more rests, found them fully ten miles behind the point where the guide and the lieutenant had planned to be. Even the men had begun to murmur among themselves, and to contrast the captain's spiritless advance with Mr. Mason's lively methods. Two o'clock, and the Pyramid Range was still far away. Daybreak came, and Mason was nearly mad with misery, the guide sullen and disgusted. Broad daylight,—six o'clock,—and here at last were the Pyramid Buttes at their right front, and, coming towards them on the trail, a single horseman. "It is Sergeant Luce," said some of the foremost troopers.

And Luce had a note, which he handed to Lieutenant Mason; but that gentleman shook his head and indicated Noel. The captain took it in silence, opened it, glanced over the contents, changed color, as all could see, and then inquired,—

"How far is it, sergeant?"

"It must be fifteen miles from here, sir. I came slowly, because my horse was worn out, and because Captain Lane thought that I would meet the troop very much nearer the pass. It's more than fifteen miles, I reckon."

"Had the attack begun before you left?"

"Yes, sir; and I could hear the shots as I came out of the pass,—hear them distinctly."

"May I inquire what the news is, captain?" said Mr. Mason, riding up to his side.

"Well," was the reply, "Lane writes that he has headed the Apaches, and that he is just moving in to the attack."

"Will you permit me to see the note, sir?" said Mason, trembling with exasperation at the indifferent manner in which it was received.

Noel hesitated: "Presently,—presently, Mr. Mason. We'll move forward at a trot, now."

Sergeant Luce reined about, and, riding beside the first sergeant of K Troop, told him in low tones of the adventures of the previous day and night, and the fact that the Apaches were there just north of the pass and in complete force. The result seemed to be, as the word was passed among the men, to increase the gait to such an extent that they crowded upon the leaders, and Noel, time and again, threw up his hand and warned the men not to ride over the heels of his horse.

Seven o'clock came, and still they had not got beyond the Pyramids. Eight o'clock, and they were not in sight of the pass. Nine o'clock, and still the gorge was not in view. It was not until nearly ten that the massive gate-way seemed to open before them, and then, far to the front, their eager ears could catch the sound of sharp and rapid firing.

"My God!" said Mason, with irrepressible excitement, "there's no question about it, captain, Lane's surrounded there! For heaven's sake, sir, let's get ahead to his support."

"Ride forward, sergeant," said Noel to Luce, "and show us the shortest way you know to where Captain Lane has corralled his horses. —I don't like the idea of entering that pass in column, Mr. Mason. The only safe way to do it will be to dismount and throw a line of skirmishers ahead. If Lane is surrounded, the Apaches undoubtedly will open fire on us as we pass through."

"Suppose they do, sir: we've got men enough to drive them back. What we want is to get through there as quickly as possible."

But Noel shook his head, and, forming line to the front at a trot, moved forward a few hundred yards, and then, to the intense disgust of Mr. Mason, ordered the first platoon dismounted and pushed ahead as skirmishers. Compelled to leave their horses with number four of each set, the other troopers, sullenly, but in disciplined silence, advanced afoot up the gentle slope which led to the heights on the right of the gorge.

Not a shot impeded their advance; not a sound told them that they were even watched. But far up through the pass itself the sound of sharp firing continued, and every now and then a shrill yell indicated that the Apaches were evidently having the best of it.

Again Mason rode to his captain. "I beg you, sir," he said, "to let me take my platoon, or the other one, and charge through there. It isn't possible that they can knock more than one or two of us out of the saddle; and if you follow with the rest of the men they can easily be taken care of." But Noel this time rebuked him.

"Mr. Mason, I have had too much of your interference," he said, "and I will tolerate no more. I am in command of this troop, sir, and I am responsible for its proper conduct."

And Mason, rebuffed, fell back without further word.

The pass was reached, and still not a shot had been fired. Over the low ridge the dismounted troopers went, and not an Apache was in sight. Then at last it became evident that to cross the stream they would have to ford; and then the "recall" was sounded, the horses were run rapidly forward to the skirmish-line, the men swung into saddle, the rear platoon closed on the one in front, and cautiously, with Mason leading and Noel hanging back a little as though to direct the march of his column, the troop passed through the river and came out on the other side. The moment they reached the bank, Mason struck a trot without any orders, and the men followed him.

Noel hastened forward, shouting out, "Walk, walk." But, finding that they either did not or would not hear him, he galloped in front of the troop, and sternly ordered the leaders to decrease their gait and not again to take the trot unless he gave the command.

Just at this minute, from the heights to the right and left, half a dozen shots were fired in quick succession; a trooper riding beside the first sergeant threw up his arms, with the sudden cry, "My God! I've got it!" and fell back from the saddle. Noel at the same instant felt a twinge along his left arm, and, wheeling his horse about, shouted, "To the rear! to the rear! We're ambushed!" And, despite the rallying cry of Mason and the entreaties of the guide, the men, taking the cue from their leader, reined to the right and left about and went clattering out of the pass.

More shots came from the Apaches, some aimed at the fleeing troop and others at the little group of men that remained behind; for the poor fellow who had been shot through the breast lay insensible by the side of the stream, and would have been abandoned to his fate but for the courage and devotion of Mason and two of the leading men. Promptly jumping from their horses, they raised him between them, and, laying him across the pommel of one of the saddles, supported by the troopers, the wounded man was carried back to the ford, and from there out of harm's way.

By this time Noel, at full gallop, had gone four or five hundred yards to the rear, and there the first sergeant—not he—rallied the troop, reformed it, counted fours, and faced it to the front.

When Mason returned to them, leading the two troopers and the dying man, his face was as black as a thunder-cloud. He rode up to his captain, who was stanching with a handkerchief a little stream of blood that seemed to be coming down his left arm, and addressed to him these words:

"Captain Noel, there were not more than six or eight Apaches

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guarding those heights. There was no excuse in God's world, sir, for a retreat. I can take my platoon and go through there now without difficulty, and once again, sir, I implore you to let me do it."

Noel's reply was, "I have already heard too much from you to-day, Mr. Mason. If I hear one more word, you go to the rear in arrest. I am wounded, sir, but I will not turn over this command to you."

"Wounded be hanged! Captain Noel, you've got a scratch of which a child ought to be ashamed," was the furious reply, upon which Noel, considering that he must at all hazards preserve the dignity of his position, ordered Lieutenant Mason to consider himself in arrest. And, dismounting, and calling to one or two of the men to assist him, the captain got out of his blouse and had the sleeve of his under-shirt cut off, and then, in full hearing of the combat up the pass, proceeded to have a scratch, as Mason had truly designated it, stanchd and dressed.

Meantime, the troop, shamefaced and disgusted, dismounted and awaited further developments. For fifteen minutes they remained there, listening to the battle a mile away, and then there came a sound that thrilled every man with excitement,—with mad longing to dash to the front: there came crashes of musketry that told of the arrival of strong reinforcements for one party or another,—which party was soon developed by the glorious, ringing cheers that they well recognized to be those of their comrades of Greene's battalion.

"By heavens!" said Mason, with a groan, "after all, we have lost our chance! It's Greene, not old K Troop, that got there in time to save them."

The looks that were cast towards their new captain by the men, standing in sullen silence at their horses' heads, were not those that any soldier would have envied.

Directing the first sergeant to take half a dozen troopers and feel their way cautiously to the front and ascertain what that new sound meant, the rest of the men meanwhile to remain at ease, Noel still sat there on the ground, as though faint from loss of blood. The bleeding, however, had been too trifling to admit of any such supposition on the part of those who had been looking on. The cheering up the pass increased. The firing rapidly died away. Soon it was seen that the first sergeant was signalling, and presently a man came riding back. The sergeant and the others disappeared, going fearlessly into the pass, and evidently indicating by their movements that they anticipated no further resistance. The arriving horseman dismounted, saluted the captain, and reported substantially that the pass was now in possession of Major Greene's men, and that the Apaches were in full flight towards the south, some of the troops pursuing.

Then at last it was that the "mount" was sounded by the trumpeter, and half an hour afterwards—full three hours after they should have been there—Captain Noel with K Troop arrived at the scene. Lame, faint from loss of blood, was lying under a tree; four of his men were killed; one of the helpless recaptured women had been shot by an Indian bullet; five more of the "Devil's own D's" were lying wounded around among the rocks. Desperate had been the defence; sore had

been their need ; safe, thoroughly safe, they would have been had Noel got there in time ; but it was Greene's battalion that finally reached them only at the last moment. And yet this was the thrilling announcement that appeared in the *Queen City Chronicle* in its morning edition, two days afterwards :

"Gallant Noel ! Rescue of the Indian Captives ! Stirring Pursuit and Fierce Battle with the Apaches !

"A despatch received last night by the Hon. Amos Withers announces the return from the front of Captain Noel, who so recently left our midst, with a portion of his troop, bringing with him the women and children who had been run off by the Apaches on their raid among the ranches south of their reservation. The captain reports a severe fight, in which many of the regiment were killed and wounded, he himself, though making light of the matter, receiving a bullet through the left arm.

"While the rest of the command had gone on in pursuit of the Apaches, the captain was sent by the battalion commander to escort the captives back to the railway.

"This despatch, though of a private character, is fully substantiated by the official report of the general commanding the department to the Adjutant-General of the army. It reads as follows :

"Captain Noel, of the Eleventh Cavalry, has just reached the railway, bringing with him all but one of the women and children whom the Apaches had carried off into captivity. The other was shot by a bullet in the desperate fight which occurred in San Simon Pass between the commands of Captains Lane and Noel and the Apaches, whose retreat they were endeavoring to head off. Greene's battalion of the Eleventh arrived in time to take part ; but on their appearance the Apaches fled through the mountains in the wildest confusion, leaving much of their plunder behind them.

"It is impossible as yet to give accurate accounts of the killed and wounded, but our losses are reported to have been heavy.'

"How thoroughly have the predictions of the *Chronicle* with regard to this gallant officer been fulfilled ! To his relatives and his many friends in our midst the *Chronicle* extends its most hearty congratulations. We predict that the welcome which Captain Noel will receive will be all that his fondest dreams could possibly have cherished."

XVI.

For a week the story of Gordon Noel's heroism was the talk of Queen City society. He had led the charge upon the Indians after a pursuit of over a hundred miles through the desert. He had fought his way to the cave in which those poor captive women were guarded, and had himself cut the thongs that bound them. He was painfully wounded, but never quit the fight till the last savage was driven from the field. For daring and brilliant conduct he was promoted over the heads of all the captains in his regiment. His name was already before the President for a vacancy in the Adjutant-General's Department, and the appointment would be announced at once. He

was coming East just as soon as the surgeon said he was well enough to travel. Mrs. Noel wanted to join him, but he had telegraphed saying no, that he would soon be with her.

So rang the chorus for several days. At the club the men shook hands over the news, and sent telegrams of praise and congratulation to Noel, and drank his health in bumpers; and two or three "old sore-heads," who ventured to point out that the official reports were not yet in, were pooh-poohed and put down.

Amos Withers had left for Washington on a midnight train immediately after furnishing the *Chronicle* with the contents of his despatch, making no allusion to that part of it which said, "Now push for that vacancy. Not an instant must be lost." Nobody could say nay to the man who had subscribed the heaviest sum to the campaign fund in his own State, and therefore both its Senators and half its representatives in the House went with him to the President to urge the immediate nomination of Captain Noel to the majority in the Adjutant-General's Department made vacant by the promotion consequent upon the retirement of one of its oldest members. Already the War Department had furnished the Executive with the names and records of the four men whom it considered most deserving, and Gordon Noel's name was not one of the four. But what was that in comparison with the eminent pecuniary and political services of Mr. Withers, when the nephew had just behaved so superbly in action?

Meantime, the Apaches had scattered through the mountains and escaped across the border, the remnant of Lane's troop taking part in the pursuit, and they, with their commander, only slowly returning to the railway. For three or four days Noel had the wires and the correspondents pretty much to himself; but then some of those enterprising news-gatherers had been getting particulars from the men, and there were two or three of K Troop in the detachment who could not conceal their derision and contempt when the newspaper-men spoke of the bravery of their captain. This set the correspondents to ferreting, and then the despatches began to take a different color. The very day that Mabel received her first letter from her husband, and was reading extracts from it to envious friends who had come in to swell the chorus of jubilee and congratulation, an evening paper intimated that recent despatches received from the seat of war revealed a different state of affairs than was popularly supposed.

But by this time interest was waning. It is the first impression that is always the strongest, the first story that is longest remembered, and no man who has believed one version will accept the truth without vigorous resistance. In his letter to his wife, Noel had spoken modestly of himself and slightly of his wounds. This only made her worship him—her hero, her gallant Gordon—the more insanelly. He intimated that he had been compelled to place in arrest one of the prominent officers of the regiment for misconduct in the face of the enemy; and this *and previous matters*, he said, would surely make of this officer an unrelenting foe. She need not be surprised, therefore, if this gentleman should strive to do him grievous harm. Mabel blushed becomingly as she read these lines to some of her friends, and that night

at the club it was hinted that Lane had been placed in close arrest for failing to support Noel in his desperate assault. Just at this time, too, Mr. Withers came back from Washington, looking mysterious.

The next published despatches were from the general himself. He was incensed over the escape of the Apaches. Measures for the capture were complete, and it was broadly hinted that a certain officer would be brought to trial for his failure to carry out positive orders.

"It is believed," said the *Chronicle*, "that the officer referred to is well known in our community, as he had, oddly enough, been a predecessor in the recruiting-service of the actual hero of the campaign."

Two weeks went by. There was no announcement of Noel's name as promoted. Other matters occupied the attention of the club and the coteries, and no one knew just what it all meant when it was announced that Mrs. Noel had suddenly left for the frontier to join her husband. Perhaps his wounds were more severe than at first reported. Then it was noticed that Mr. Withers was in a very nervous and irritable frame of mind, that constant despatches were passing between him and Captain Noel in the West, and that suddenly he departed again on some mysterious errand for Washington. And then it was announced that Captain Noel would not be able to visit the East as had been expected.

All the same it came as a shock which completely devastated the social circles of the Queen City when it was announced in the New York and Chicago papers that a general court-martial had been ordered to assemble at Fort Gregg, New Mexico, for the trial of Captain Gordon Noel, Eleventh Cavalry, on charges of misbehavior in the face of the enemy, and conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman.

The *Chronicle* made no allusion to the matter until after it was heralded over the city by the other journals. Then it announced that it was in possession of information showing conclusively that Captain Noel was the victim of the envy of certain officers in his regiment, and that the charges had been trumped up from the false and prejudiced statement of the man whom he had been compelled to place in arrest for misconduct in action. "Captain Noel had demanded a court-martial," said the *Chronicle*, "that he might be triumphantly vindicated, as he undoubtedly would be."

At the club several men surrounded Lieutenant Bowen with eager inquiry as to the facts in the case. Bowen, who was now in charge of the rendezvous as Noel's successor, was very reticent when interrogated. He said that while an officer might demand a court of inquiry, he could not demand a court-martial; they were entirely different things; and it was certainly the latter that had been ordered.

"Was there not some likelihood of malice and envy being at the bottom of the charges?" he was asked. "And was it not unfair to let him be tried by officers prejudiced against him?"

Bowen said he did not belong to the Eleventh, but he knew it well enough to say no to the first part of the question. As to the other, there were only two officers from that regiment on the court, and one was Noel's old friend and colonel.—Riggs.

It was in the midst of this talk that Mr. Amos Withers had suddenly appeared and begged a few words in private with Mr. Bowen.

Withers was in a state of nervous excitement, as any one could see. He talked eagerly, even pleadingly, with the silent lieutenant, and at last suddenly arose and, with the look of a defeated and discomfited man, left the club-house, entered his carriage, and was driven rapidly away.

That night an officer from the War Department arrived in the Queen City, and was closeted for a while with Lieutenant Bowen, after which the two went to the Chief of Police, and, in company with him, visited the cell where Taintor, deserter and forger, was confined, took his statement and that of the Chief, and with these documents the officer went on to division head-quarters.

Meantime, the campaign had come to an end. Captain Noel had reported, in arrest, to the commanding officer at Fort Gregg, and Mrs. Riggs had tearfully greeted him: "She would so love to have him under her roof, that she might show her sympathy and friendship; but so many officers of high rank were coming on the court that the colonel was compelled to give every bit of room he had to them." Noel thanked her nervously, and said he could be comfortable anywhere, but his wife was coming: she had telegraphed that she could not be separated from him when he was suffering wrong and outrage. Captain and Mrs. Lowndes, moved to instant sympathy, begged that he would make their quarters his home, and placed their best room at his disposal.

Two evenings afterwards he was permitted to go himself to the railway to meet poor Mabel, who threw herself into his arms and almost sobbed her heart out at sight of his now haggard and care-worn face. Mrs. Lowndes then came forward and strove to comfort her, while Noel rushed off to send some telegrams. Then they drove out to the post, and Mabel's spirits partially revived when she found that it was not a prison she had come to share with her husband. Everybody was so gentle and kind to her, she began to believe there was nothing very serious in the matter, after all.

It lacked yet five days to the meeting of the court, and in the intervening time there arrived at the post a prominent and distinguished lawyer from the East, sent to conduct the defence by Mr. Withers's orders; and many a long talk did he hold with his client and the officers who were gathering at Gregg.

The charges of misconduct in face of the enemy had been preferred by the Department commander, who cited as his witnesses Captain Lane, Lieutenant Mason, Lieutenant Royce, the guide, and two or three non-commissioned officers. To the charge of "conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman" there were specifications setting forth that he had caused to be circulated and published reports to the effect that it was his command that had been severely engaged, and his command that had rescued the captives and defeated the Indians, which statements he well knew to be false. Two or three correspondents and railway employees and the telegraph operator were witnesses. This would be a hard one to prove affirmatively, as the judge-advocate found when he examined his witnesses as they arrived, and the great lawyer assured the accused officer that he could secure him an acquittal on that

charge. The real danger lay in the testimony of Captain Lane and Lieutenant Mason, who had not yet come.

And now, hour after hour, for two days, Mabel was reading in her husband's face the utter hopelessness that possessed him; nay, more, the truth was being revealed to her in all its damning details. It might be impossible for the prosecution to prove that he had actually caused the false and boastful stories to be given to the press and the public; but how about the telegrams and letters Mr. Withers had so proudly come to show her? How about the telegrams and letters she herself had received? What impression could she derive from them but that he was the hero of the whole affair, and that he was lying painfully wounded when he wrote? The gash through the beautiful white arm turned out to be a mere scratch upon the skin, that a pin might have made. It was Greene's command from Fort Graham that had rescued Lane, and Lane with his men who had rescued the captives, and then fought so hard, so desperately, against such fearful odds, and sustained their greatest losses, while her hero,—her Gordon,—with nearly fifty men, was held only a mile away by half a dozen ragamuffins in the rocks. She had almost adored him, believing him godlike in courage and magnanimity; but now on every side the real facts were coming to light, and she even wrung them from his reluctant lips. And yet—and yet—he was her husband, and she loved him.

Again and again did she question Mr. Falconer, the eminent counsel, as to the possibilities. This gentleman had fought all through the war of the rebellion, and had won high commendation for bravery. He had taken the case because he believed, on Withers's statement, that Noel was a wronged and injured man, and because, possibly, a fee of phenomenal proportion could be looked for. He met among the old captains of the Eleventh men whom he had known in Virginia in the war-days, and learned from them what Noel's real reputation was, and, beyond peradventure, how he had shirked and played the coward in the last campaign: so that he, who had known Mabel Vincent from her babyhood and loved her old father, now shrank from the sorrow of having to tell her the truth. Yet she demanded it, and he had to say that her husband's fate hinged on the evidence that might be given by Captain Lane and Mr. Mason.

That very night these two officers arrived, together with three members of the court. The following day at ten o'clock the court was to begin its session, and four of its members were still to come. That night Mr. Falconer and her husband were closeted with several men in succession, seeking evidence for the defence. That night there came a despatch from Withers saying he had done his best in Washington, but that it seemed improbable that the President would interfere and accept Noel's resignation from the service.

Noel showed this to Mabel and sank upon the sofa with a groan of despair.

"Oh, my darling!" she whispered, kneeling by his side and throwing her arms about his neck, "don't give way! There must be hope yet! They cannot prove such cruel charges! There must be a way of averting this trouble."

"There is one," said he, starting up. "There is one, if you will only do it to save me."

"What would I not do to save you, Gordon?" she asked, though her face was paling now with awful dread of what the demand might be.

"Mabel, my wife, it is to see—him at once. There is nothing that he will not do for you. I know it—for I know what he has done. See him. You know what to say. I cannot prompt you. But get him to tell as little as he possibly can in regard to this case."

"Gordon!" she cried, "you ask me to do this, after the great wrong I did him?"

"There is no other way," was the sullen answer. And he turned moodily from her side, leaving her stunned, speechless.

XVII.

Somewhere about ten o'clock that night the judge-advocate of the court dropped in at the "bachelor quarters," where both Lane and Mason had been made welcome, and asked to see those gentlemen. He was conversing with them over the affair at the San Simon, when Captain Lowndes was ushered into the room.

"Am I intruding?" asked the latter. "I merely wished to speak to Lane a moment."

"By no means, Lowndes. Come right in. We'll be through in one minute.—Then, as I understand you, Lane, you could distinctly see K Troop as it forded the stream, and could see the Apaches who fired upon them?"

"Yes,—distinctly. I was praying for their coming, as our ammunition was running low. The Indians seemed so encouraged by the ease with which they drove them back that the whole band swarmed out from cover and crowded on us at once. It was in the next fifteen minutes that my men were killed,—and that poor woman."

"And there were only six Indians who opened fire on Noel?"

"Only six, sir."

The judge-advocate was silent a moment. "There is, of course, a chance that our absentees may get here to-morrow morning in time. If they do, you will be the first witness called; if they do not, we adjourn to await their arrival. It promises to be a long case. A telegram has just reached me, saying that additional and grave charges are being sent by mail from division head-quarters."

Captain Lowndes listened to this brief conversation with an expression of deep perplexity on his kindly face, and as soon as the judge-advocate had gone and Mason had left the room he turned to Lane:

"You know they are staying with us. That poor girl has come all this weary journey to be with him, and there was absolutely no place where she could lay her head unless we opened our doors and took him in too."

Lane bowed assent: "I had heard, Lowndes. It was like you and that dear wife of yours."

"Lane," spoke the older man, impetuously, after a moment of em-

barrased silence, "I want you to do something for my wife, and for me. Come home with me for a few minutes. You won't see him; but—it is that heart-broken girl. She begs that you will see her,—to-night. Here is a little note."

Lane's sad face had grown deathly pale. He looked wonderingly in his companion's eyes a moment, then slowly took the note and left the room, leaving Lowndes to pace the floor in much disquiet.

In five minutes the former reappeared in the door-way. "Come," he said, and himself led the way out into the starlit night. Not a word was spoken by either man as they slowly walked down the row. Arriving at his quarters, Captain Lowndes ushered his friend into the little army parlor, and Mrs. Lowndes came forward, extending both her hands. "It is good of you to come," she said. "I will let her know, at once."

Two shaded lamps cast a soft, subdued light over the simply-furnished little room. What a contrast to the sumptuous surroundings of the home in which he had last met her! Lane stood by the little work-table a moment, striving to subdue the violent beating of his heart and the tremors that shook his frame. Not once had he seen her since that wretched night in the library,—in that man Noel's arms. Not once had he permitted the thought of seeing her to find a lodgement. But all was different now: she was well-nigh crushed, heart-broken; she had been deceived and tricked; she was here practically friendless. "I well know that at your hands I deserve no such mercy," she had written, "but a hopeless woman begs that you will come to her for a few moments,—for a very few words."

And now he heard her foot-fall on the stairs. She entered, slowly, and then stopped short almost at the threshold. Heavens! how he had aged and changed! How deep were the lines about the kind gray eyes! how sad and worn was the stern, soldierly face! Her eyes filled with tears on the very instant, and she hovered there, irresolute, not knowing what to do, how to address him. It was Lane that came to the rescue. For a moment he stood there appalled as his eyes fell upon the woman whom he had so utterly—so faithfully loved. Where was all the playful light that so thrilled and bewitched him as it flickered about the corners of her pretty mouth? Whither had fled the bright coloring, the radiance, the gladness, that lived in that exquisite face? Was this heavy-eyed, pallid, nerveless being, standing with hanging head before him, the peerless queen he had so loyally and devotedly served,—whose faintest wish was to him a royal mandate,—to kiss whose soft white hand was a joy unutterable? All this flashed through his mind in the instant of her irresolute pause. Then the great pity of a strong and manful heart, the tenderness that lives ever in the bravest, sent him forward to her side. All thought of self and suffering, of treachery and concealment and deception, vanished at once at the sight of her bitter woe. His own brave eyes filled up with tears he would gladly have hidden, but that she saw, and was comforted. He took her limp, nerveless hand and led her to a chair, saying only her name,—*"Mrs. Noel."*

For several minutes she could not speak, but wept unrestrainedly,

he, poor fellow, walking the floor the while, longing to comfort her, yet powerless. What could he say? What could he do? At last she seemed to regain her self-control.

"Captain Lane," she said, "it is useless for me to tell you how much I have learned, since coming here, of which I was ignorant before. Every effort has been made to spare me; people have been so considerate and kind, that the truth, as I am beginning to see, has been kept from me. Mr. Falconer, Captain Noel's—our lawyer, has at last admitted that almost everything depends upon your evidence. Forgive me, if you can, that I believed for a while that you inspired the charges against him. I know now that you refused to press the matter, and that—that I am not to blame any one. In his deep misfortune my duty is with my husband, and he—consented that I should see you. Captain Lane," she said, rising as she spoke, "do not try to spare my feelings now. I am prepared for anything,—ready to share his downfall. If you are asked as to the contents of the note you sent him just before the fight, must you tell what they were? Do you recall them?"

"I must, Mrs. Noel. I remember almost the exact words," he replied, gently, sorrowfully.

"But that is all, is it not? You know nothing more about the delay in reaching you?" And her eyes, piteous in entreaty, in shame, in suffering, sought one instant his sad face, then fell before the sorrow and sympathy in his.

For a moment there was no answer; and at last she looked up, alarmed.

"Mrs. Noel," he said, "I could not help it. I was eagerly awaiting their coming. I saw them approach the ford and the pass. I saw that there were only six Apaches to resist them; and the next thing I saw was the retreat."

"Oh, Captain Lane!" she cried, "must you testify as to this?" And her trembling hands were clasped in misery. "Is there *no* way, —no way?"

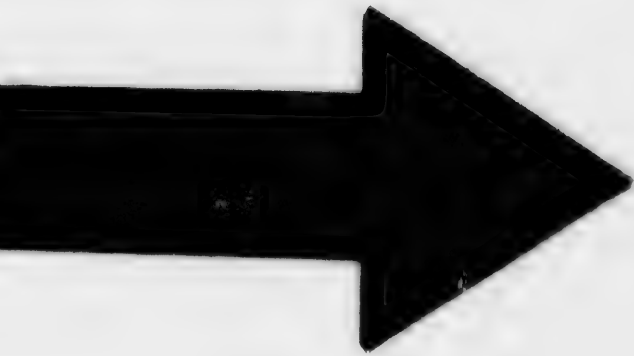
"Even if there were," he answered, slowly and mournfully, "Mr. Mason's testimony and that of the men would be still more conclusive."

Throwing herself upon the sofa, the poor girl gave way to a fit of uncontrollable weeping; and Lane stood helplessly, miserably by. Once he strove to speak, but she could not listen. He brought her a glass of water presently and begged her to drink it: there was still something he had to suggest. She took the goblet from his hand and looked up eagerly through her tears. He was thinking only of her—for her—now. The man who had robbed him of happiness, of love, of wife and home and hope, and who had done the utmost that he dared to rob him of honor and his soldier reputation,—the man now wretchedly listening overhead to the murmur of voices below,—he forgot entirely except as the man she loved.

"Mrs. Noel, your friends—his friends—are most influential. Can they not be telegraphed to that his resignation will be tendered? Can they not stop the trial in that way?"

"It is hopeless. It *has* been tried, and refused. If he is found guilty there is nothing left,—nothing left," she moaned, "but to ta





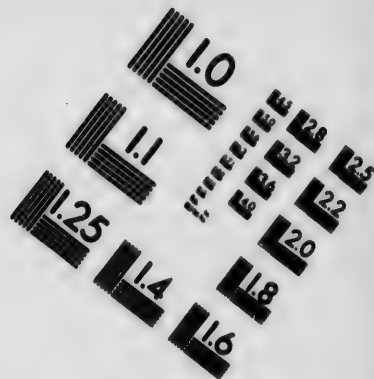
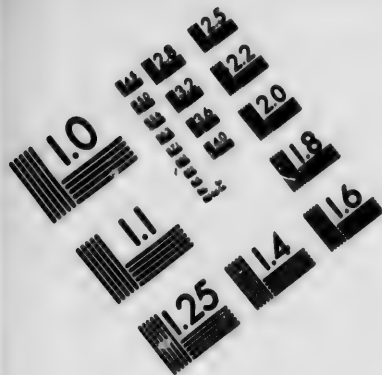
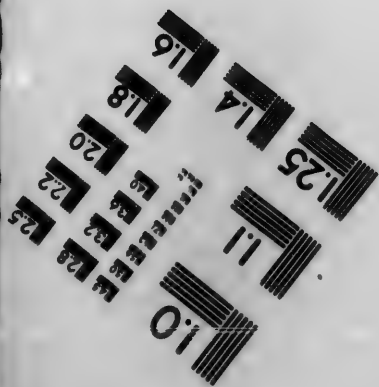
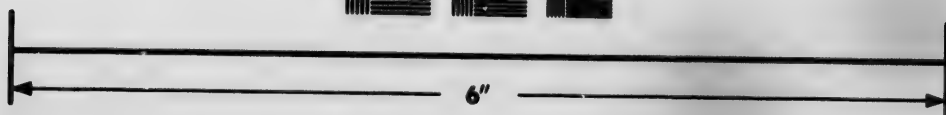
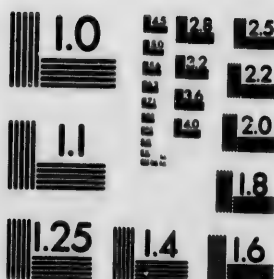


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him back to the East with me, and, with the little we have now, to buy some quiet home in the country, where our wretched past need not be known,—where we can be forgotten,—where my poor husband need not have to hang his head in shame. Oh, God! oh, God! what a ruined life!”

“Is there nothing I can do for you, Mrs. Noel? Listen: that court cannot begin the—the case to-morrow. Four members are still to come. It may be two days yet,—perhaps three. Perhaps Mr. Withers and his friends do not appreciate the danger and have not brought pressure to bear on the President, but—forgive me for the pain this must give you—there are other, new charges coming from division head-quarters, that I fear will harm him still more. I grieve to have to tell you this. Try and make Mr. Withers understand. Try and get the resignation through. If you will see Mr. Falconer and—and the captain now, I can get the telegraph operator.”

“What charges—what new accusations do you mean?” she asked, her eyes dilating with dread. “Are we not crushed enough already? Oh, forgive me, Captain Lane! I ought not to speak bitterly, you—you have been so good, so gentle. You, the last man on earth from whom I should seek mercy,” she broke forth impetuously,—“you are yet the one to whom I first appeal. Oh, if after this night I never see you again, believe that I suffer, that I realize the wrong I have done. I was never worthy the faintest atom of your regard; but there’s one thing—one thing you must hear. I wrote you fully, frankly, imploringly, before—before you came—and saw. Indeed, indeed, I had waited days for your reply, refusing to see him until after papa died; and then I was weak and ill. You never read the letter. You sent them all back unopened. I cannot look in your face. It may have been hard, for a while, but the time will soon come when you will thank God—thank God—I proved faithless.”

And then, leaving him to make his own way from the house, she rushed sobbing to her room. When next he saw her, Reginald, her brother, with Lowndes and his tearful wife, was lifting her into the ambulance that was to take them to the railway, and the doctor rode away beside them. But this was ten days after.

True to Lane’s prediction, the court met and adjourned on the following day. Colonel Stannard and Major Turner telegraphed that they were delayed *en route* to the railway, and nothing was heard from the other missing members. Two days more found the court in readiness, but the trial did not begin. There arrived on the express from the East, the night before all seemed ready for the opening session, Lieutenant Bowen, of the cavalry recruiting-service, with two guards who escorted the ex-clerk Taintor.

Telegrams for Captain Noel had been coming in quick succession, but he himself was not seen. It was Lowndes who took the replies to the office. The first meeting of the court was to have occurred on Monday. Tuesday evening the judge-advocate sent to the accused officer a copy of the additional specifications to the charge of conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman, and notified him that the witnesses had just arrived by train.

At four o'clock Wednesday morning Mrs. Lowndes was aroused by a tapping at her door, and recognized the voice of Mrs. Noel calling her name. Hastily she arose and went to her, finding her trembling and terrified. Gordon, she said, had been in such misery that he would not undress and try to sleep, but had been restlessly pacing the floor until after midnight. Then he had gone down to make some memoranda, he said, at the desk in which he and Mr. Falconer had their papers, and, as she could not sleep, she soon followed; but he was not there. Occasionally he had gone out late at night and walked about the parade after every one but the guard had gone to bed, and she thought he must have done so this time, and so waited, and waited, and peered out on the parade and could see nothing of him. At last she could bear it no longer.

Lowndes had heard the sobbing voice and one or two words. He was up and dressed in no time, and speedily found the officer of the day. "Do you think he could have made away with himself?—suicide?"

"Suicide! no!" answered Lieutenant Tracy. "He's too big a coward even for that!"

No sentry had seen or heard anything of him. The whole post was searched at daybreak, and without success. A neighboring settlement, infested by miners, stock-men, gamblers, and fugitives from justice, was visited, but nothing was learned that would tend to dispel the mystery. One or two hard citizens—saloon-proprietors—poked their tongues in their cheeks and intimated that "if properly approached" they could give valuable information; but no one believed them. That night, deserted and well-nigh distracted, Mabel Noel lay moaning in her little room, suffering heaven only knows what tortures; far from the yearning mother arms, far from home and kindred, far even from the recreant husband for whose poor sake she had abandoned all to follow him, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness or in health,—only to be left to the pity and care of strangers.

But she was in an army home and among loving, loyal, simple hearts. The women, one and all, thronged to the little cottage, imploring that they might "help in some way." The men, when they were not damning the runaway, were full of suggestion as to the course to be pursued. Mabel would accept only one explanation of his disappearance: crazed by misfortunes, he had taken his own life; he had said he would. But the regiment could not believe it, and in forty-eight hours had traced him, on the saloon-keeper's horse, over to the Southern Pacific, and thence down to El Paso. More than one man gave a sigh of relief that the whole thing could be so easily settled without the scandal of all that evidence being published to the world. The court met and adjourned pending the receipt of orders from the convening authority. The telegraph speedily directed the return to their stations of the several members. Lieutenant Bowen went back to the East, leaving Taintor in the guard-house, and in a week Reginald Vincent came to take his sister home and to whisper that Gordon was safe in the city of Mexico,—Mr. Withers was sending him money there; and so from her bed of illness, suffering, and humiliation the poor girl

was almost carried to her train, and all Fort Gregg could have wept at sight of her wan and hopeless face.

She shrank from seeing or meeting any of her old associates, yet was eager to reach her mother's roof, fondly believing that there she would find letters from her husband. It hurt her inexpressibly that he should have fled without one word to her of his intentions; but she could forgive it because of the suffering and misery that bore him down and unsettled his mind. It stung her that Mr. Withers, not she, should be the first to learn of his place of refuge; but perhaps he thought she had gone East at once, and so had written there. She attributed his desertion to the strain to which he had been subjected; but she had been spared the sight of those last "specifications." Her first inquiry, after one long, blessed clasping in her mother's arms, after the burst of tears that could not be restrained, was for letters from him; and she was amazed, incredulous, when told there were none. Mr. Withers was sent for at once: that eminent citizen would gladly have dodged the ordeal, but could not. He could only say that two telegrams and two drafts had reached him from Noel, and that he had honored the latter at sight and would see that he lacked for nothing.

She would have insisted on going to join him in his exile, but he had sent no word or line; he had ignored her entirely. He might be ill, was the first thought; but Mr. Withers assured her he was physically perfectly well. "Everything is being done now to quietly end the trouble," said Mr. Withers. "We will see to it at Washington that his resignation is now accepted; for they will never get him before a court, and might as well make up their minds to it. They cannot drop or dismiss him for a year, with all their red-tape roads and their prate about the 'honor of the service.' I've seen enough of the army in the last three months to convince me it's no place for a gentleman. No, my dear, you stay here,—or go up to the mountains. We'll have him there to join you in a month."

But the authorities proved obdurate. Even the millionaire failed to move the War Secretary. Unless Captain Noel came back and stood trial, he would be "dropped for desertion" ("and, if he came back and stood trial, would probably be kicked out as a coward and liar," thought to himself the official who sat a silent listener). This Noel would not do. Withers sent him to Vera Cruz on a pseudo business-visit, and Mabel, silent, sad-faced, but weeping no more, went to a little resort in the West Virginia mountains.

Meantime, another court had been convened, another deserter tried, convicted, and sentenced, and before being taken to prison he made full statement to Captain Lane and two officers called in as witnesses. This was Taintor. He had known Captain Noel ever since his entry into service. Taintor was an expert penman, a gambler, and at times a hard drinker. He had enlisted in the troop of which Noel was second lieutenant while they were in Tennessee, and had deserted, after forging the post-quartermaster's name to two checks and getting the money. The regiment went to the Plains: he was never apprehended, and long years afterwards drifted from a position in the quartermaster's dépôt at Jeffersonville to a re-enlistment and a billet as clerk in the recruiting

rendezvous at the Queen City. Knowing that Noel would recognize him, he deserted there, as has been told, taking all the money he could secure by forged checks for small amounts which he trusted would not excite suspicion. But he had fallen in love with a young woman, and she was dependent on him. He came back to the neighborhood after he thought the hue and cry was over, was shadowed and arrested by the police, and had given himself up for lost when Captain Noel was brought to his cell to identify him. He could hardly believe his senses when the captain said it was all a mistake. Then he was released, and went to work again across the river, and one night Noel came,—told him he knew him perfectly and would keep his secret provided he would "make himself useful." It soon turned out that what was wanted was the imitation of Captain Lane's signature on one or two papers whose contents he did not see, and the type-writing of some letters, one of which, without signature of any kind, and referring to some young lady, her secret meetings with Captain Noel, and saying, "You are being betrayed," was sent to Captain Lane at Fort Graham. Very soon after this Captain Lane came back. Taintor again fled until he knew his old commander had gone away, and then, venturing home, was rearrested, as has also been told.

Lane knew the anonymous letter well enough, but now for the first time saw its object. It was to make him accuse Mabel Vincent of deceit and faithlessness and so bring about a rupture of the engagement which, at that time, Noel saw no other means of removing as the one obstacle that stood in the way of his hopes.

But what were the other papers?

August came, and with it the rumors of the appearance of the dreaded *vómito* at Vera Cruz; but in the remote and peaceful nook where mother and daughter—two silent and sorrowing women—were living in retirement, no tidings came. Vainly Mabel watched the mails for letters—if only one—from him. She had written under cover to Mr. Withers, but even that evoked no reply.

One sunshiny afternoon they were startled by the sudden arrival of Regy. He sought to avoid question and to draw his mother to one side, but Mabel was upon him.

"You have news!" she said, her white face set, her hands firmly seizing his arm. "What is it? Have they dismissed him?"

"They can never dismiss—never harm him more, Mabel," was the solemn answer.

* * * * *

Some months afterwards Mrs. Vincent received a packet of papers that belonged to the late Captain Noel. Mabel had been sent to Florida for the winter, and was spending her early widowhood with kind and loving friends. The consul at Vera Cruz had written to Mr. Withers full particulars of his cousin's death,—one of the first victims of the *vómito*,—and had sent these papers with the formal certificates of the Mexican officials. Mr. Woodrow, one of the executors of Mr. Vincent's estate, showed singular desire to examine these papers, but the widow thought they should be opened only by her daughter. It was not until then that, with much hesitancy, the gentleman explained

that Mr. Vincent had given him to understand that he had intrusted some papers to Captain Noel which that officer had promised to send at once to his old friend Captain Lane. Mrs. Vincent could learn no more from him, but she lost no time in searching the packet.

Within twenty-four hours Mabel was summoned home by telegraph, and there for the first time learned that to her father's partner, for the use of the firm in their sore straits of nearly two years before, Captain Lane had given the sum of fifteen thousand dollars, and that among Captain Noel's papers was what purported to be a receipt in full for the return of the sum from Mr. Vincent, which receipt was signed apparently by Frederick Lane and dated July 2, 188—. But this, said Mr. Woodrow, must be a mistake: Mr. Vincent had assured him late in July that he had not repaid it, but that Clark had his instructions to repay it at once, and all Clark's books, papers, and receipts had been examined, and showed that no such payment had been made.

"It simply means that the very roof under which we are sheltered is not ours, but that noble fellow's," said Mrs. Vincent; and that night she wrote, and poured forth her heart to him, while Mabel locked herself in her room.

No answer came. Then Mr. Woodrow made inquiries of the officer at the rendezvous, and learned that Captain Lane had gone to Europe with leave of absence for a year; and there her letter followed him. She demanded, as a right, to know the truth. She had given the executors to understand that the debt must be paid, if they had to sell the old homestead to do it. She would be glad to go and live in retirement anywhere.

Not only did she, but so did Mr. Woodrow, receive at last a letter from distant Athens. The widow sobbed and laughed and pressed her letter to her heart, while Woodrow read his with moistened eyes, a suspicious resort to his cambric handkerchief, and an impatient consignment of all such confounded quixotic, unbusinesslike cavalymen to—to the deuce, by Jupiter; and then he went off to show it to his fellow-executors.

The long summer wore away. Autumn again found mother and daughter and Regy at the dear old home, but light and laughter had not been known within the massive walls since the father's death. The tragedy in Mabel's life, coming so quickly after that event, seemed to have left room for naught but mourning. "She has so aged, so changed," wrote Mrs. Vincent on one of the few occasions when she wrote of her at all to him, and she wrote every month. "I could even say that it has improved her. The old gayety and joyousness are gone, and with them the wilfulness. She thinks more—lives more—for others now."

Winter came again,—the second winter of Mabel's widowhood,—and she was urged to visit the Noels at their distant home; but she seemed reluctant until her mother bade her go. She was still wearing her widow's weeds, and her lovely face was never sweeter in her girlhood days than now in that frame of crape. Of the brief months of her married life they never spoke, but the Noels loved her because of her devotion to him when not a friend was left. In early March the

news from home began to give her uneasiness; "mamma did not seem well," was the explanation, and it was decided that they would go on as far as Washington with her, and spend a day or two there, when Reginald would meet and escort her home.

And so, one bright morning in that most uncertain of months, Mabel Noel with her sister-in-law and that lady's husband stood at the elevator landing, waiting to be taken down to the hall-way of their hotel. Presently the lighted cage came sliding from aloft. Mrs. Lanier entered, followed by the others. Two gentlemen seated on one side removed their hats, and the next instant, before she could take her seat, the lady saw one of them rise, bow, and extend his hand to Mabel, saying, with no little embarrassment and much access of color, something to the effect that this was a great surprise,—a statement which her fair sister-in-law evidently could find no words to contradict, even had she desired so to do. Neither of the two seemed to think of any others who were present. Indeed, there was hardly time to ask or answer questions before they had to step out and give place to people desiring to ascend; and then the gentleman nearly tumbled over a chair in the awkwardness of his adieu. Mrs. Noel's face was averted as they left the hall, but all the more was Mrs. Lanier desirous of questioning:

"Who was your friend, Mabel?"

And Mabel had to turn or be ungracious. Her face was glowing as she answered, simply,—

"Captain Lane."

An hour later Mrs. Lanier said to her husband,—

"That was the man to whom she was said to be engaged before Gordon; and did you see her face?"

Once again they met,—this time at the entrance to the dining-room; and there Captain Lane bowed gravely to "my sister, Mrs. Lanier,—Mr. Lanier," when he was presented. The lady seemed distant and chilling. The man held out his hand and said, "I'm glad to know you, captain. I wish you could dine with me. But Lane had dined, and was going out.

The third day came, and no Reginald. Expecting him every moment, Mabel declined to go with her friends on a shopping-tour, and was seated in her room, thinking, when there came a tap at the door: a card for Mrs. Noel, and the gentleman begged to see her in the parlor. Her color heightened as she read the name. Her heart beat flutteringly as she descended the stairs. He was standing close by the door, but he took her hand and led her to the window at their right.

"You have news—from mamma!" she cried. "Tell me—instantly!"

"Mr. Woodrow thinks it best that you should come, Mrs. Noel; and she has sent for me. Reginald went directly West last night. Will you trust yourself to my care? and can you be ready for the next train?—in two hours?"

Ready! She could go instantly. Was there no train sooner? She implored him to tell if her mother's illness was fatal. He could only say that Mrs. Vincent had been quite suddenly seized; and yet they hoped she would rally. Mabel wept unrestrainedly, upbraiding herself bitterly for her dilatory journey; but she was ready, and had gained

composure when it was time to start. Mrs. Lanier's farewell was somewhat strained, but the captain seemed to notice nothing.

Unobtrusively, yet carefully, he watched over her on the homeward way. Tenderly he lifted her to the pavement of the familiar old dépôt, where Regy met them. Mamma was better, but very feeble. She wanted to see them both.

Three days the gentle spirit lingered. Thrice did the loving woman send for Lane, and, holding his hand in hers, whisper blessing and prayerful charge as to the future. Regy wondered what it could all mean. Mabel, on her knees in her own little room, pleading for her devoted mother's life, knew well how to the very last that mother clung to him, but only vaguely did she reason why.

At last the solemn moment came, and the hush of twilight, the placid, painless close of a pure and gracious life, were broken only by the sobbing of her kneeling children and of the little knot of friends who, dearly loving, were with her at the gate into the new and radiant world beyond.

One soft spring evening a few weeks later Mabel stood by the window in the old library, an open letter in her hand. Twice had she looked at the clock upon the mantel, and it was late when Frederick Lane appeared. Mr. Woodrow had unexpectedly detained him, he explained, but now nothing remained but to say good-by to her. His leave was up. The old troop was waiting for him.

"Will you try to do as I asked you, and write to me once in a while?" he said.

"I will. It was mother's wish." But her head sank lower as she spoke.

"I know," he replied. "For almost a year past she had written regularly to me, and I shall miss it—more than I can say. And now—it is good-by. God bless you, Mabel!"

And still she stood, inert, passive, her eyes downcast, her bosom rapidly rising and falling under its mourning garb. He took her hand and held it lingeringly one minute, then turned slowly away.

At the portière he stopped for one last look. She was still standing there, drooping. The fair head seemed bowing lower and lower, the white hands were clasping nervously.

"Do you know you have not said good-by, Mabel?"

She is bending like the lily now, turning away to hide the rush of tears. Only faintly does he catch the whispered words,—

"Oh! I cannot!"

THE END.

THE TEARS OF TULLIA.

ROME shook with tyrannies. A bloated face,
Vile for all vices that debase,
Glowered and menaced from the imperial place.

Men said "Caligula" below their breath,
Shivering, as one that faintly saith
In some new deadlier way the old word "death."

That robe which once round Cæsar drooped sublime,
Draggled and frayed, though not with time,
Flaunted from every fold wet stains of crime.

The empire of the world had fallen so low,
Inertly it saw its own blood flow,
As treason's black brood dealt it many a blow.

Deeper at each fresh ignominy it sank
In mires of cowardice more rank,
Scourged by a monster and a mountebank.

Where vast the arena of the circus lay,
Loosed lion or tiger, day by day,
Would flesh its fangs in shuddering human prey.

Throned o'er the slaughter, sat, with purple robes,
With laurelled brows, with wine-beared eyes,
He whom to gaze upon was to despise.

Yet regnant thus, with crime for kith and kin,
Did this crowned cut-throat seek to win
A hideous immortality out of sin.

His infamies caught splendor, like the fires
That leapt in fury from those pyres
Where wives would watch their lords burn, sons their sires.

He seemed as one whose insolence erects
A fane to his own dire defects,
With rapine, butchery, lust, for architects,—

A pile through haze of history to uprear
At every deed pure lives revere,
Its towering gibe, its monumental sneer! . . .

And yet even he, Caligula, could feel
Moods to his fiend-swayed soul appeal
Wherefrom the shadow of clemency would steal.

By some caprice no courtier could explain,
 He looked with favor, not disdain,
 On Livius, a young noble of his train.

When weary of insult, lechery, murder, all
 Wherewith his madness held in thrall
 Rome's cringing crowds, on Livius he would call.

From the massed purple cushions where he lay,
 "Read me some poet," he would say,
 "My Livius, in your wise melodious way."

Then the youth, bowing with complaisance meek,
 In lute-like tones would speak
 Line after line from Homer's golden Greek.

And once, when, kneeling at the tyrant's knee,
 Rapt by unwonted passion, he
 Had read the dark wrongs of Andromache,

Caligula half raised his drowsy head,
 And with the smile men quaked at, said,
 "My Livius, thou hast eloquently read !

"None but a lover could so treat this theme ;
 And thou, if rightly I deem,
 Hast felt the full deep sorcery of love's dream.

"Would the kind gods had let me feel it, too !—
 The gods that guard me as they do ! . . .
 Nay, my sweet Livius, does report say true

"That thou hast loved, from boyhood sheer till now,
 Tullia, the maid with vestal brow,
 Patrician Publius' grandchild, and dost vow

"Unflinching virtue, continence complete,
 Scorn of thy young blood's hardest beat,
 Till thou and she in marriage-bonds may meet ?

"Nay, Livius, dost thou love this maid so well ?
 I charge thee, in all fair frankness tell
 How strong is thy subservience to her spell !"

Then, smitten as by the pang that barbs a spear,
 Livius felt throes of mortal fear,
 Not for himself, but one divinely dear.

He thought of how this royal vulture fed
 On multitudes of guiltless dead,
 With beak that ever bode unsurfeited ;—

Of deeds that showed like some demoniac boy's
Whom no malevolence gluts or cloy's,
With rack, bowl, dagger, and gibbet for their toys ;—

Of how Tiberius through his foul schemes died,
Silanus had sought suicide,
And Orestilla had been stolen a bride

Even at the altar from her bridegroom's arms. . . .
Remembering these and countless harms
Dastard as these, Livius with strange alarms

Thrilled as he murmured, "Emperor, if the sky
Made every star that hangs on high
A word of fire for me to answer by,

"Still, vainly, in spite of such all-grasping speech,
My love for Tullia could I teach—
Its force, its faith, its rapture, and its reach!"

So spake the youth, tumultuously. A frown
Dragged the prone despot's eyebrows down.
"Such love," he sneered, "my Livius, courts renown!

"What say'st thou if I seek a way to prove
This vaunted value of thy love,
And how the ambition of its flame above

"Myriads of lesser lights doth dart and shine?
What say'st thou, favorite fool o' mine"
(Here a full snarl broke), "should my mood incline

"To test this love by some unique ordeal
And find if thou, who art sworn so leal,
Canst from the imaginary pluck the real

"And prove to me, to all men, past a doubt,
That adoration thus devout
Blindfold may trace its precious object out?"

Pale turned young Livius, understanding not,
Dreading some despicable plot,
While from the Emperor's lips bleak laughter shot,

Unpitying as when bared white bodies quailed
While the lash bit—when stout hearts failed
While to the gaunt cross hands and feet were nailed!

"Go!" cried Caligula. . . . A moment more,
And arms of strong slaves, by the score,
Had pushed poor Livius past the tyrant's door.

Alone they left him in a spacious hall,
Brooding on what grim doom might fall,
What fiend diabolic waited to appall,

Till, at the close of one slow hour, he heard
The bolts that held him captive stirred,
Obedient to Caligula's loud word.

Then with a smile where aly derision slept,
The Emperor past the portal stept,
And straightway two stout minions lightly leapt

Toward Livius ; o'er his eyes with speed they rolled
A bandage of such envious fold
That by quick night all vision was controlled.

Quite still he stood, resisting not ; he knew
Resistance in a trice would hew
From mercy its last piteous residue.

" Fate, work your worst on me," his fleet thoughts ran ;
" Ere now full many a nobler man
Hath bowed below this arch-assassin's ban !

" So Tullia dies not with me, I shall bless
Calamity for its kindliness,
And garner consolation from distress !"

But even as thus he mused, the air with sound
Of numerous foot-falls did abound,
Like plash of delicate rain on grassy ground,

And through the wide-flung doors, with timorous tread,
With each a lovely and low-bent head
Half shadowing her bewilderments of dread,

Came twenty as bloomful maidens as the dome
Of lucid heaven o'erarching Rome
Had ever beamed on ; hence at speed from home

All had perforce been summoned by the sway
Of him unscrupulous to pay
Their lives in penalty for their delay.

Now rose the tyrant's voice, that seemed to kill
The silence brutishly, such ill
Its every note was packed with, pealing shrill.

" Livius," its words came, " with a poet's tongue
Hast thou belauded Tullia, young,
Radiant, thy love ; but here in beauty among

"A sisterhood of other beauteous mates,
Thy recognition she awaits,
Thy swift intuitive welcome supplicates.

"Let now this boasted adoration dare
Its magic energy declare;
I bid thee touch on brow, cheek, eyelids, hair,

"Each maiden of these assembled, till thou find
The enslaving mistress of thy mind,
Being blind thyself as Love, thy god, is blind.

"Yet if by touch of hand upon her face
Thou failest, braggart boy, to trace
Rightly her lineaments, not mere disgrace

"May wreak revenge on thy rash head, but she,
Tullia, and thou, her choice, must be
Bound each to other and cast within the sea!

"So shalt thou learn what ecstasies belong
To love, with all its bonds made strong
As death's own lean clasp in the engirding thong.

"Yea, thou shalt learn of love that though it fly
So lofty and in so large a sky,
Low may it sink at last and darkly die!" . . .

The looks of all save Livius now were turned
On Tullia, whose amazed eyes burned
With agony—then with adjuration yearned.

Scorn answered only from the Emperor's gaze;
Fierce to the grouped girls rang his phrase:
"One after one seek Livius, till he lays

"A hand upon your faces dusk or fair,
Searching for his lost Tullia there,
In each! . . . Obey me, or falter if ye dare!"

None dared to falter; slowly all gathered near
Livius, who stood with mien austere
That told what pain must make his veiled eyes drear.

Yet the hand shook not that erelong he laid
On the first face of those arrayed
Before him, and with loitering touch essayed

To prove alone by tactual sense what sight
Would instantly have solved aright,
If given one vague ray of divulging light.

Still, eager and yet with impotence, he sought !
 Face after face, being swept thus, brought
 But worse confusion to his laboring thought.

"I cannot find thee, Tullia !" rose his cry,
 Freightèd with torture. "We will die
 Together, and curse the gods in our last sigh !"

And yet even here, while thick sweat dampèd his brow,
 A courage tyranny could not bow
 Nervèd him once more and made him sweep forth, now,

For the last time to the last face, his hand ; . . .
 Then suddenly, as by joy unmanned,
 He shoutèd, "Pitying gods, I understand !

"These tears have told me ! Look, my hand is wet
 With their sweet testimony ! I set
 My life and hers on the dear amulet

"Their tidings proffer ! *None has wept but she !*
 I have found thee, Tullia ! 'Love's decree
 Can teach even blindness a new way to see !"

Before his final word impetuous rung,
 Poor Tullia, with loud sobs, had sprung
 To clasp his neck—had wildly about it clung.

So cruelty had been slain by love ; and they
 Who saw Caligula that day
 Clothed in atrocity, were still wont to say

(Long after vengeful massacre had wrought
 End of his villany, as it ought)
 That just when Livius found the face he sought,

Learning glad Tullia by her tears to tell,
 Tears also from the Emperor fell—
 Strange as if dawn's white dews were seen in hell !

Edgar Fuwcott.

THE AUTHOR OF "THE COLLEGIANS."

IT is now nearly a quarter of a century since Mr. Dion Boucicault made the announcement of a new play to be produced at Niblo's Garden,—an Irish drama which was advertised as founded upon fact, and which was to be presented under the captivating title of "The Colleen Bawn."

New plays were a novelty at that period, but Irish incidents and plot and Irish character in the drama were as popular then as now, while the cast for the original production of "The Colleen Bawn" was such as to insure its success. Laura Keane was to play the part of Anne Chute, and Agnes Robertson the title rôle of the sweet Colleen Eily O'Connor, Mr. Boucicault himself taking the part he has since made famous of the hunchback Danny Mann. Old theatre-goers can recall the excitement and enthusiasm of the presentation-night,—the continuous rounds of applause which greeted each situation, each bit of brilliant dialogue between Anne Chute and Hardress Cregan, Kyrle Daly and Father Tom, while the exquisite pathos and simplicity of the "Colleen's" lines, rendered by the actress whose place in the part can never be refilled, gave a poetic charm to every scene in which Eily makes her appearance. Certain discrepancies, however, were apparent in this first rendering of "The Colleen Bawn" which could not fail to attract the attention of some of the spectators. The play was an almost literal transcription or adaptation of an Irish novel entitled "The Collegians;" and a gentleman in the audience called the next morning upon Mr. Boucicault, introducing himself as the nephew of its author, Gerald Griffin. The result of the interview was a prompt revision of the play, Mr. Boucicault acting with every courtesy towards his visitor, who desired that the novelist's name should be associated with that of the dramatist. From that date this play, by far the most successful in Mr. Boucicault's versatile *répertoire*, has been known as a dramatized version of "The Collegians," a novel which has begun to enjoy a revival of the popularity which made it famous in the early decades of this century.

Gerald Griffin, best known as the author of "The Collegians" and of a tragedy entitled "Gisippus," in which Macready made his most solid reputation, was the son of an Irish gentleman who emigrated to America in the year 1817, settling with some of his children and grandchildren near what is now known as Binghamton, New York. Mr. Griffin had been induced to take this step through the glowing accounts given by his eldest son, an officer in the English army, who had visited America and returned to Ireland captivated by the scenery near the Susquehanna. Difficult as it was to resign himself to the parting, Gerald, then a lad of about sixteen, elected to remain in Ireland with his brother, a physician practising in Limerick, and two sisters who were too young for the voyage and the trials of pioneer life.*

* The younger of the two sisters joined the family in America soon after their emigration, and from her lips I heard the story of her brother's life during my own childhood.

Young Griffin's decision was the result of an unconquerable impulse towards literature, especially the making of verses and dramatic writing, which he feared would be turned aside if he followed his family to the New World. He had already sketched "Gisippus;" his desk was full of poems many of which are wrongly attributed to his later years, and he had arranged various small dramas for private representation, throwing himself ardently into the character of stage-manager when they were produced by an enthusiastic set of amateurs in his native town. His realistic views would have suited the company of the *Théâtre Française* to-day. An amusing incident connected with these boyish efforts was told me by an old English gentleman who recalled one of the rehearsals—if not the actual performance—of a play written by Gerald Griffin in his seventeenth year. The heroine was to take poison and die in a dramatic agony. The young lady cast for the part, however, failed to carry out the author's idea of the death-scene, and insisted upon dying gracefully, with a becoming expression of placidity. Young Griffin watched the rehearsals of this scene with impatience for two or three days, and then a brilliant idea occurred to him. The evening of the performance he presented Miss — with a glass containing a bitter draught of quassia, asking her to drink it in the poison-scene. The result may be imagined. All the contortions of expression and action which the young dramatist desired followed, and he applauded loudly, assuring his indignant "leading lady" that it could not injure her, and that it had improved her "business" in the play tremendously.

About the same time, before his seventeenth birthday, he one day summoned his brother the doctor to his room and handed him the manuscript of a tragedy in blank verse which he had just completed. Dr. Griffin spent the night reading and criticising it. Fortunately, he did not share the opinion of many of the lad's friends that literature was a sorry profession for him to enter upon, and the reading of this play, "Aguire," decided him to advance his younger brother's literary interests as speedily as possible. John Banim, then beginning to be famous, pronounced "Aguire" to be the work of a genius; but, unfortunately, it was never produced at any theatre, and was accidentally destroyed and not rewritten. The tragedy of "Gisippus," which was not completed until the next year, had, however, been sketched when he was fourteen. The nephew of the author told me that his uncle had been fond of reciting passages of it to him in their very boyish days, walking between Limerick and Adare. They were the same with which Macready years after the author's death held London audiences spell-bound during the famous run of the play at Drury Lane.

After "Aguire" was written, Gerald appealed to his brother for permission to try his fate among the theatres and publishers of London. Naturally enough, the older man hesitated to consent to such a venture on the part of an inexperienced lad, just turned eighteen, who had no private fortune, and who was endowed with the most sensitive of poetic temperaments, a disposition generous and unsuspicious to a fault, and a faith in the art he was pursuing which would lead him to endure any toil or privation for the chance of success. Various minor con-

siderations had also to be thought of by the older brother as likely to war against the young author's life in London. He was an ardent Catholic; and those were intolerant days for the followers of the Church of Rome. He had a sense of honor in literary work which was almost extreme; no consideration then or ever induced him to so much as violate a private opinion or judgment of his own in print, and his idea of the fulfilment of a contract—so one of the most venerable editors in England told me—bordered on the quixotic, so afraid was he of not giving the full value demanded by publisher or public. A miniature still in the possession of his family represents him at this period of his life as a strikingly handsome youth, with a face almost Spanish in coloring, the eyes darkest hazel, the complexion a clear olive, the brow broad and lofty, with masses of dark hair tossed back, the features strong in outline, but regular, and the mouth singularly sweet in expression. There is a blending of mirth and melancholy in the face: the boyish glance seems to give a challenge to the future from which he expected so much; the proud and sensitive lips seem eager to speak of things that lie deep within the young and ardent heart.

To London in 1823 the young man journeyed with the best of spirits and the lightest heart, believing he could assist the great actors of the day in restoring the drama or purifying the stage of what he, with many others, considered mere dramatic charlatanism. He was eighteen years of age, vigorous in constitution except for a weakness of the heart which subsequently tried him severely; life had hitherto been prosperous, and the world had shown him its smiling side. He had "Aguire" and the notes for "Gisippus" in his satchel, and a box of other manuscript, poems and essays, which represented to the lad fame and fortune. His personal attractions, the magnetism of manner and power of influencing those about him, seem to have been entirely unconscious, and not to have been counted in his stock of worldly advantages either by himself or by his family. Had it been otherwise, he might have reached success easily through the medium of the society of the day, for London in 1823 was as brilliant in its way as London in 1890; but a striking characteristic of the boy and the man was his disdain of using any personal influence in his literary career.

He sought out very quiet lodgings, whence he wrote to the family at Adare notes of the London he began to know. He had introductions through his devoted friend Banim to the Kembles and other professionals, who seem only to have shown him in those days the civility of an occasional box-seat for the theatre. He speedily wrote home deploring the decline of the "legitimate" in the drama, not, however, without some sense of humor in his criticism of the sort of play that was then in vogue, while his analysis of the methods to be employed to insure popularity might be repeated to-day, and it seems hardly possible that nearly seventy years have elapsed since they were written.

"I will tell you," he writes to his brother, "something which will give you an idea of the drama and the dramatic management of the

day, which, however, for the credit of the *métier*, I would not breathe to ears profane. Of all the walks in literature it is the most heart-rending, the most toilsome, and the most harassing to a man who is possessed of a mind that may be at all wrought on by circumstances. The managers only seek to fill their houses, and don't care a rap for all the dramatists that ever lived. . . . With respect to the taste of a London audience, you may judge what it is when I tell you that 'Venice Preserved' will scarcely draw a decent house, while such a piece of unmeaning absurdity as the 'Cataract of the Ganges' has filled Drury Lane every night for three weeks past. A lady on horse-back riding up a cataract is rather a bold stroke; but these things are quite the rage now. They are hissed by the gods; but that is a trifle, so long as they fill the house and the managers' pockets. . . . There is a rage for fire and water and horses, and as long as it continues fire and water and horses are the lookout of the sovereigns of the drama. Literary men see the trouble which attends it, the bending and cringing to performers, the chicanery of managers, and the anxiety of suspense which no previous success can relieve them from; and therefore it is that they seek to make a talent for some other walk and content themselves with the fame of a 'closet writer,' which is accompanied with little or none of the uneasiness of mind which the former brings with it. . . . I cannot immediately fix my eye upon any one who I should say without hesitation was qualified to furnish us with a good tragedy, excepting only my friend Banim and countryman Knowles. They decidedly stand best on the stage at present. Kean is going off to America; and Macready, I understand, speaks of entering the Church, but I should be sorry for it. This I have only just heard said, and know not whether it be quiz or earnest; but it is widely reported. Have you seen any more of Sheil's work? I think his last piece, 'The Huguenot,' a very indifferent one; and the public thought so too, for they damned it three nights. For us poor devils who love the drama well and are not so confident in other branches of that most toilsome and thankless of all professions, authorship, we must only be content to wade through thick and thin and make our goal as soon as we may. This sawdust and water work will pass away, like everything else, and then perchance the poor half-drowned muse of the buskin may be permitted to lift her head above the flood once more. I have got a sneaking kind of reputation," the lad goes on, "as a poet among my acquaintances." In fact, the circle among which his handsome young face and slim boyish figure began to be known had already gained a hint of the boy's genius, and any one less sensitive than he would have availed himself of the advances of friendship which were certainly made him at the time, but which he completely overlooked, doubtless because he was, as his companions later averred, utterly devoid of vanity, and while he was making clever criticisms on everything he saw and heard about him he seems to have had no idea of the effect which he produced himself.

Not being able to compete with the "sawdust and water work" style of drama, Griffin began about this time to turn his entire attention to writing for reviews or magazines; but some idea may be given

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of the manner in which some of the journals of the day were conducted by the following extract from a letter to his mother. "I set about writing," he says, "for various weekly publications, all of which, except the *Literary Gazette*, cheated me abominably. Finding this to be the case, I wrote for the great magazines. My articles were generally inserted, but on calling for payment there was so much shuffling and shabby work that it disgusted me." He defends himself in another letter against the charge of writing for the stage, which his correspondent seems to think immoral. "I thought," he says, "to have set your mind at rest upon the question of the drama in this letter, but I have scarcely room for my arguments. Give me leave, however, to say that when a humble individual observes a great deal of immorality in a very alluring form I cannot see anything wrong in his making whatever exertions he can to use an efficient means in a more worthy cause. I believe no one ever asserted that the stage was in itself immoral; but to destroy it altogether would be—to use a medical simile—to abolish a very powerful medicine because quacks had contrived to make it kill. Every night on which you prevent a number of people from doing ill and help them to do well is, in my opinion, not badly spent. . . . At the time when the Church launched its thunders against the stage it was certainly deserving of censure; but we are reforming."

A dozen causes seemed now to prevent the lad from obtaining the successes which at this period actually meant bread-and-butter to him. He had no faculty for pushing himself either into the good graces of a publisher or into print, and he withdrew from all society, shutting himself up for a time in a sort of garret lodging, not letting his friends know that he was actually in want, but writing steadily, among other things translating an entire book for two guineas, but doing very little dramatic work. "Yesterday," he records, "I have written a play in one act, to be published this week with a most laughable illustration by the Hogarth of the day, George Cruikshank. There's dramatic fame for you! In blank verse, too. Mind, I don't say poetry. I have a conscience as well as another man."

But this sort of work no longer had its charms for him, and "Gisippus" was locked away, to be produced after the author's death. Even from Banim he concealed the fact of his pressing necessities, and at last, by the merest chance, a friend who invaded his solitude at midnight found him, "looking like a ghost," seated at his desk, but with the air of a man who might not have tasted food all day. The friend insisted upon questioning him regarding his condition, but the only assistance Griffin would accept was an introduction to a publisher, for whom, however, he wrote under an assumed name, having become almost morbid about presenting himself personally to either an editor or a stage-manager. Writing of this time later, when at the height of his popularity and worldly success, he says, "I can hardly describe to you the state of mind I was in at this time. It was not an indolent despondency, for I was working hard, and I am now—and it is only now—receiving money for the labor of those dreadful hours. I used not to see a face that I knew; and, after sitting writing all day, when I

walked in the streets in the evening it actually seemed to me as if I was of a different species altogether from the people about me. The fact was, from pure anxiety alone I was more than half dead."

He deemed himself fortunate in securing a position on a well-known magazine at a guinea a week, he giving six hours a day to reviews of all sorts, essays on topics of the day, in fact, as he says himself, five hundred different subjects, written under as many signatures; and outside of this he worked for other journals, and began his first series of tales,—*"Holland Tide, or Tales of the Munster Festivals."* Later he is in receipt of two pounds a week from an editor who is extremely anxious to discover the real name of the author of certain sparkling papers on questions of the day, which, in spite of the young man's anxieties, were brimming over with good-humored sarcasm, fun, and piquant criticism. "The editor," he writes, "sends my money to my address every week by a livery servant, who never says a word, but slips the note in, touches his lips, and—mum! presto!—off he is. All very romantic, isn't it?" Later the editor himself arrived, determined to penetrate the mystery of his contributor's name,—*"a tall, stout fellow, with moustachio'd lip and braided coat."* This gentleman speedily carries the young author off to his superb country place, where, after many social attentions, he makes a bargain with him for we dare not think how much work at a hundred pounds a year,—this, however, to be only paid him according to the amount of work he was able to finish weekly. When we reflect that young Griffin's work on this one magazine alone was to include poetry, fiction, criticism, essay-writing, paragraphs, and "anything which the editor required and which did not violate principle and sense of right," there seems almost a pathos in the fact that the lad could regard it as so brilliant a stroke of fortune and rejoice in that "his luck" was turning. His work was copied widely. Had it been written to-day it would have placed him among the foremost of magazine contributors. As it was, the periodical for which he wrote received all the credit of the work done by the editor's young assistant, and he seems to have had not the least idea that he might have grown suddenly into fame. Certainly Gerald Griffin's work at that date was superior to much that was being done about him, and "having," he finds, "some hours to spare in the twenty-four" not appropriated to his regular position, he, to use his own expression, "sold them to a publisher for five dollars a week, writing steadily from nine o'clock until three in the afternoon," the publisher encouraging him with a prospect of half as much again at the end of a certain period of time! The ludicrous side of it all began to appeal to him very forcibly. He speaks a little wistfully of his high-hearted hopes on arriving in London, and now, he says, in writing to his sister, "you may perceive that I am putting myself in train for 'Warren's Jet Blacking,'" which in 1825 required a special sort of advertisement. Keats's death about this time affected him powerfully, there having been a common bond of sympathy between the two young men, and Gerald recognized a certain similarity in their tastes and feelings, and perhaps it was with a view to spare himself from the lash of merciless criticism that he so long preserved his incognito. Keats's young sister

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he knew well, and she told him that she had frequently found her brother on suddenly entering his room seated with the notorious review of his work in his hand, "reading as if he would devour it,—completely absorbed, absent, and drinking it in like mortal poison. The instant he observed her, however, he would throw it by and begin to talk of some indifferent matter." From his conversations with his intimate friend Valentine Llanos, who was one of Keats's nearest and closest friends, and who conversed with him three days before his death, Griffin had not the least doubt that Gifford's malignant review killed the poet. This same Llanos, who was on delightfully friendly and social terms with many of the young men of the day, seems to have exerted a beneficial effect over their minds, and Gerald was apt to grow despondent when long away from him. However, the turn of luck certainly had come. Applications were now made to him for comedies and librettos for the English Opera. He produced a play the name of which is forgotten, doubtless through his indifference on the subject, although it was highly successful and the part of the heroine taken by the famous Miss Kelly. About the same time he wrote an article in the *News* proposing a new plan for the English Opera, making suggestions for complete stage business, the management of the recitative, etc. This attracted a great deal of attention, and Griffin followed it up with a complete essay on the Italian and English Opera, suggesting that the latter might be made completely operatic, and giving specimens of the sort of recitative which would be suitable. He made use of the signature of "G. Joseph," by which name only he was known to the manager of the English Opera-House, Mr. Arnold; but, in evidence of his horror of having any one piece of work accepted or successful simply on the merits of a former production, I may mention the fact that after Arnold had accepted and produced with great success two or three operettas written by him he sent a fourth manuscript under another name, determined to discover just how much intrinsic merit lay in the composition. His style, however, betrayed him at once to Arnold, who showed the manuscript to John Banim, asking him if he was not certain that Joseph was the author. Banim, who was then established as reader for certain theatres, of course detected Griffin's *ruse* at once, but, unfortunately, mistook its motive, fancying that his young friend had taken a new *nom de plume* in order to avoid placing himself under the least obligation to Arnold's reader; and this trifling circumstance produced a breach in their friendship which the younger man as well as the older lived to deplore. All that we know of these operettas or comedies which he apparently wrote with such facility is that they were highly successful at the time and performed by the best stock-companies. In writing of his turn of fortune so far as theatrical matters are concerned, he says, "It would have been very delightful a year ago; and even now I own I am not indifferent to it, though a great deal if not all of the delicious illusion with which I used to envelop it is lost; but a better feeling has come in its place." He was suffering painfully during this time from the weakness of the heart to which I have alluded, and which obliged him to spend many wakeful nights, while his publishers little dreamed of the tremendous tension put upon

him by his literary work, which never flagged, except when, after, as he says himself, "trying to brazen it out," he would break down suddenly with attacks of complete prostration, increased doubtless by his intense anxiety to be up and at work again. It was soon after one of these that his brother, coming to London, found him working for ten men, but delighted by the fact that he was making headway in all desired directions. His book was completed, and he rejoiced in receiving seventy pounds for the entire manuscript and copyright.

The young author, flushed with what he felt at least would soon mean success and relief from mere drudgery, returned to Ireland for the first time in five years, and met a circle of friends in Dublin, with whom he spent one gayly happy day, at the end of which he was met by news that his favorite sister had died suddenly, the physicians supposing her death to be the result of the long tension she had suffered on his account and the too swift revulsion of feeling on hearing of his success and his intended visit. The blow completely prostrated him for a time; but on reaching Pallas Kenry, where his brother's family resided, he determined to rouse the family circle from the depression into which they had fallen: therefore the remembrance of that visit lingered long in the minds of all who knew and loved him.

Of this visit to Pallas Kenry his youngest sister writes to the family in America,—

"Would you wish to view at a distance our domestic circle here? William and I are generally first at the breakfast-table, when after a little time walks in Miss H——, next Mr. Gerald, and last of all Monsieur D——. After breakfast our two doctors go to their patients; Gerald takes his desk by the fireplace, and writes away, except when he chooses to throw a pinch or a pull at the ringlets, cap, or frill of the first lady next him, or gives us a stave of some old ballad. Our doctors then come in at irregular hours, when the first question, if it is early, is, 'Lucy, when shall we have dinner? I am dying,' and if late, 'Why did you wait so long?' After dinner, books, tea, and sometimes a game at cards,—formerly chess; but it is too studious for Gerald as a recreation."

Many and laughable are the freaks recorded of him during this visit, when the plot of "The Collegians" was working in his mind; but they are hard to reproduce, since, it is said, there was so much more in his manner and inimitably ridiculous way of doing or saying an amusing thing than in the mere fact or substance of the fun itself. So complete were his gayety and *abandon* at the time that non-literary friends looking on were frequently disedified at the apparent light-heartedness and possibly school-boy wit of the young man who had written "Gisippus," and who was known to be engaged on a work of a serious character.

It was during a siege of blinding fog in the November of 1828 that "The Collegians" was completed, young Griffin's spirits being unusually fine, in spite of the depressing weather, for the work was so much the result of inspiration that, as he said later, "it wrote itself." But in every scene he regretted the fact that he was not preparing it for the stage, his dramatic inclinations having been subdued only because

of the necessity of earning his daily bread. "What I would give," he exclaimed to his brother one evening, "to see Edmund Kean in that scene of Hardress Cregan at the party just before his arrest, where he is endeavoring to do politeness to the ladies while the horrid warning voice is in his ear! Every movement of Kean's countenance in such a scene as that would make one's nerves creep. Every motion and attitude of his, his ghastly efforts at complaisance, and his subdued sense of impending ruin, would be all-sufficient to keep an audience in a thrill of horror."

The main portion of the book was written before breakfast, as during that meal there was nearly always a rap at the door and the printer's boy appeared, demanding copy. Frequently the manuscript would be handed forth without revision, the author simply letting his pen fly onward, but declaring that he had no difficulty in keeping up this strain of work. What annoyed him in the book, however, was the impossibility of making Kyrle Daly more interesting than Hardress Cregan. "Just listen to me!" he exclaimed one day: "isn't it extraordinary how impossible it seems to write a perfect novel,—one that shall be read with interest and yet be perfect as a moral work? There is Kyrle Daly, full of high principle, prudent, amiable, and affectionate, not wanting in spirit nor free from passion, but keeping his passions under control, thoughtful, kind-hearted, and charitable,—a character in every way deserving our esteem. Hardress Cregan, his mother's spoiled pet, nursed in the very lap of passion, and ruined by indulgence; not without good feelings, but forever abusing them; having a full sense of justice and honor, but shrinking like a craven from their dictates; following pleasure headlong, and eventually led into crimes of the blackest dye by the total absence of self-control. Take Kyrle Daly's character in what way you will, it is infinitely preferable; yet I will venture to say nine out of ten of those who read the book would prefer Hardress Cregan, just because he is a fellow of high mettle, with a dash of talent about him."

"The Collegians" was published, and instantaneously accepted by the public as the work of a genius. The leading men and women of the day read it with delight; the scene in which the death of the old huntsman was depicted found its way into innumerable journals of the time; while writers like Miss Edgeworth and society women like Lady Morgan were anxious to lionize the new author; but in evidence of his intense dislike to anything of the kind I may mention the fact that he formed a close friendship at the time with an Italian gentleman of rank, from whom he kept so assiduously the secret of his authorship that it was only through Sir Philip Crampton's meeting them together after several months of intimacy that the secret was revealed. The Italian upbraided Griffin mercilessly for allowing him to hear so much said of "The Collegians" in society he requested without having the pleasure of knowing that his friend was the author of the book.

Life seemed about to smile upon the young author from every point of view, and his letters at this time brim over with contentment, fun, and interest in the things about him. He writes to his sister Lucy assuring her that she may be content with her way of spending Lent, but

adds that he has been dancing quadrilles on a Monday evening and meeting a most charming girl indeed. "I will tell you how I might give you some idea of her. If Eily O'Connor had been a gentlewoman she would have been just such a one, I think, as Miss —, the same good nature, simplicity, and playfulness of character, the same delicious nationality of manner. Isn't this very modest talking of my heroine? I have a great mind to put her into my next book; and if I do I will kill her, as sure as a gun, for it would be such a delightful pity. I exult in the destruction of amiable people, particularly in the slaughter of handsome young ladies, for it makes one's third volume so interesting. I have even had a hankering wish to make a random blow at yourself; and I think I will do it some day or other: so look to yourself, and insure your life, I advise, for I think if well managed you'd make a very pretty catastrophe; but until I find occasion for killing you, my dear Lucy, continue to love me." Soon after this an invitation reached the young man from Mr. and Mrs. L——, people of the highest cultivation, living with every possible comfort and ease in their own home near Limerick. In accepting the cordially-worded request that he should visit them, young Griffin laid the foundation of one of the most perfect friendships ever recorded in a literary life. Mrs. L—— was a woman who had inherited from distinguished parents mental endowments which were precisely what Griffin most needed in a companion and friend. Henceforward she was the judge to whom he submitted everything, the one whose keen perception no flight of his poetic fancy could escape, and at the same time the critic who pronounced most carefully upon his defects, taking as vivid an interest in his improvement as in his successes.

The success of "The Collegians" led to the writing of a number of novels, essays, poems, etc., to the pleasantest of social associations, and to all those pleasures which Griffin as a lad of eighteen facing the world had longed to enjoy. Just how and when the idea of suddenly renouncing them all and entering a religious order came to him his biographer has not stated, but I may venture to quote the opinion given me by Mr. Aubrey De Vere. He assured me that the leading idea in Gerald Griffin's mind was that writing fiction was injurious to his own standard of thought and feeling, and that his higher inspiration was for a life devoted to charitable works. He began to criticise his own novels unsparingly, declaring that he found in some of them tendencies which he disapproved. He was nervous over this, anxious for the work even of a missionary, but by no means either morbid or fantastic in his views, as some of his critics have averred. When he decided to join the Christian Brotherhood to devote himself to a life of simple usefulness, of teaching the poorer classes, and also of writing religious works, he was in the calmest and serenest frame of mind. The call had reached him, and it was not to be resisted or denied. One who lived in the same order years later told me that those among the Christian Brothers who remembered him declared that never was a more joyous or happy spirit among them. He had studied law, theology, and metaphysics; he had mingled with the leading spirits of the day; he had talked philosophy with the followers of Voltaire and Hume; he had listened to every

sort of opinion that floated through the London he called his home, and he had of late years been met more than half-way by fame and pecuniary success. There was no depression in his decision, no sudden phase of feeling that there was a tremendous heroism or sacrifice in the step he contemplated. It was as clearly a necessity to him and the scheme of life and salvation he proposed to himself as if it had been a Saul who, listening to the voice in the heavens, answered, "My Lord and my God." Even his devoted friend Mrs. L——, who had no sympathy with his religious beliefs, acknowledged the sublime fitness of the life he deliberately chose for himself. Her regret at losing the comradeship so dear to her was natural enough. He writes to her begging her forgiveness for seeming cold, but not daring to express himself too much at length. He speaks of their meeting often again; but in point of fact after entering the Brotherhood he desired that this should not be the case. He threw himself ardently into the new work, and felt that distractions from without were not wise. When his decision had been reached, he visited Pallas Kenry for the last time. He had built a little house for himself in the garden there, which consisted of one room, and to this he retired from time to time for religious meditation and study, although at other times he was the same joyous, mischievously loving member of the small home circle. He defended his purpose to the friends who considered it fanatical by desiring them to reflect that self-sacrifice, self-denial, and mortification are at all times admired in the pursuit of ambition, worldly glory, or military renown, and yet let them be undertaken for the sake of religion and, behold, they seem intolerable and fantastic to one's friends. This being his spirit, it is not to be wondered at that he spent his last days at home joyously, in spite of the regret he must have felt on severing personal associations forever. The day before his departure from home his brother went to Gerald's room for a quiet talk before the family dinner. The door was opened, and after a few moments' delay Dr. Griffin was admitted, to find his brother standing in the middle of the room, his face pale and his eyes full of something which might have been the passion of remembrance or the last flame of merely worldly feeling. The fireplace was filled with charred bits of paper, and in an instant the elder brother knew what had been done. Every particle of unpublished manuscript which he had with him, but one, had been destroyed; and this would have shared the fate of the rest had not Dr. Griffin arrived in time to lay claim to it. Gerald smiled as his brother stretched out his hand for the tragedy upon which his first boyish hopes had been built,—which had been, as he considered, the saddest failure of his life, and yet which he, with all his freedom from vanity, his diffidence about himself, believed in to the day of his death. "Gisippus" was saved from the flames, and twelve years after the author's death was produced at Drury Lane by Macready before the most brilliant of London audiences, the queen attending the second representation of the play and commanding its continuance. Of his life in religion there need here be said only that it gave evidence of the same sensitive scrupulosity that had distinguished his life in the world. Being naturally unpunctual, he endeavored to make conformity to every rule of the house a matter

of grave duty. Having commenced a religious tale, he one morning was in the midst of a sentence, the word "beyond" being under his pen, when the bell rang summoning him to the refectory. He at once responded to the summons, leaving the word unfinished. Never again was he to pick up the pen that he had dropped. The same day he was attacked with fever, and on Friday, the 12th of June, 1839, he expired. There seems to be a curious irony and yet fitness in the course of fate in certain lives, and in the case of the author of "The Collegians" this is strikingly apparent to those who recall his enthusiasm for the drama, and his desire to be known as the producer of a play which, as he said, should elevate the stage and provide good where ill had been. At the present day Gerald Griffin is best known as the author of the intensely dramatic novel to which Mr. Boucicault has given a stage setting, and as having left a tragedy which when it was performed proved that purity of sentiment and diction, strong character-drawing, and intense passion are not incompatible with the loftiest moral point of view.

Lucy C. Lillie.

OUR ENGLISH COUSINS.

IT is great fun, to a man with a weakness for studying human nature, to listen to the talk of returning tourists about our cousins across the water. The two or three hundred live Americans who always may be found on a big ocean "liner" approaching our shores may represent all States of the Union and all circles of American society, they may differ shockingly about religion, the tariff, dress, and the liquor question, but they may be relied upon to agree almost unanimously that the English are a queer, unsociable, rather unhappy people, who see no good in any other race or nation and very little in one another.

I used to know a rural philosopher—he was a Pennsylvania German—who would explain all differences of opinion by the remark, "Vell, it is yoost as a man is raised. If he don't been raised to know anyding about some dings, how can he get 'em right?" I often feel like using the same expression, changed only a little, to explain the mistaken ideas that some Americans, who are not fools, have about the English people. They have had no opportunities of knowing English men or women; they did not learn anything about them before going abroad, and when they reached the mother-country they had no means of getting acquainted; so they had to depend upon impressions of those with whom they chanced to come in contact. Englishmen as scantily equipped who have often come to America, roamed about aimlessly for a week or a month, and then gone back home and printed books or letters about us, have occasioned indignant howls from Americans who happened to read their lucubrations; but how do the offending Britishers differ from the ordinary American tourist who airs his opinions of our cousins across the water?

Having already admitted that our people who go abroad are not

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fools, and knowing that no one hates more than the American to blunder about anything, I assume to set my small self up as a teacher for a few moments, and tell something truthful about the English.

In the first place, you can't study a great people correctly from the top of an omnibus or the window of a cab. Neither can you get a good idea of them by spending all your time in theatres, hotels, and eating-houses, and seeing the sights. That is the way tourists usually try to do it; but they would learn nearly as much by sitting by their fire-sides at home and reading the advertising pages of an English newspaper. I shouldn't think much of an Englishman who would study us in any such stupid fashion.

To see people at their best you must have some acquaintance with them; but of the thousands of tourists whom I have seen on their way home, not one in twenty had a single friend or acquaintance in the mother-country. Most of them were not to blame for this, for Englishmen are scarce in America, so letters of introduction to Britons of any class are not easy to get, except in large cities. The rural Britisher is a big-hearted fellow, as easy to get acquainted with as his cousin the American farmer; but our tourists seldom go into the rural districts: they imagine that London and a few "show" places contain all of England worth seeing. It isn't easy, though, to "scrape acquaintance" with a Londoner, and I can't see how he differs in this respect from an inhabitant of New York, Philadelphia, or Chicago. I profess to be a good-natured fellow myself, and willing to unload all I know on any one who shows any longing for it, but I do expect that the recipient will first have himself properly introduced. On the other hand, it has never occurred to me that some of my distinguished fellow-citizens of the metropolis are stupid or inhospitable simply because I haven't the honor of their acquaintance and am obliged to judge them only by their outward appearance. For instance, a prominent banker under whose hospitable mahogany I sometimes swing my legs is the most delightful fellow in the world to his intimates, but in the street, on the cars, or in his office, he is sober, sharp, and reserved. Why shouldn't he be? Do any of us wear our hearts on our sleeves before strangers? Not unless we are fair game for confidence-men. Now, to the travelling American all Englishmen are strangers, and act accordingly. If they find themselves stared at curiously, and look suspicious, or sullen, or indignant, in reply, what wonder? What would you do, genial and great-hearted American reader, if an Englishman visiting this country were to stare curiously at you in the street, at your office, in the restaurant, or at the theatre? Unless you are better-natured and weaker-minded than I, you would be enough provoked to look cross and let him understand that you thought him an impertinent nuisance.

I don't profess to be anybody in particular, nor to have anything about me that should make people kinder to me than to anybody else, yet during small trips in England I have found our British cousins so pleasant a lot that I don't hesitate to pay them the highest compliment in the world, which is that they are remarkably like Americans. Some of their customs differ from ours, but that is entirely their own affair. In almost everything that makes men and women interesting in them-

selves and pleasing to their fellow-beings they are worth knowing and remembering. I am not speaking of the aristocratic classes only, but of all classes with whom American tourists would care to associate. Each stage of a people's development has its special ear-marks, and it seems to me that the better class of English, having got beyond the time when they had to fight for their lives and their rights, clear their forests and drain their bogs, and worry about having a roof over their heads and keeping the wolf from the door, have reached a period in which courtesy seems their special study and delight. In my earlier days abroad I imagined that I was being treated with special consideration, probably because of the letters of introduction I was careful to obtain before starting; but I learned in time that I fared no better than those about me. Good manners and thoughtful kindness was the rule; rudeness—even rough, good-natured "off-handedness"—was the exception.

I learned also that the English have acquired the virtue of deliberation, and never are in a hurry or fret. It is not necessary for me to inform the reader that England is the greatest business nation in the world; yet all the business is conducted in a quiet, leisurely way that seems to an American like child's play, but is dead earnest all the same. Your English banker will be found in some little building not at all like an American bank, and with very few clerks in sight. Nobody rushes breathlessly in or out; yet the amount of business transacted daily in that dingy little building is enormous.

Instead of being glum and unhappy, as most of our tourists imagine them, the English give more time and attention to their enjoyments than any other respectable people in the world. They do not crave excitement, like some Americans; but genuine enjoyment—rest for the body, and gratification for the eye, ear, and palate—they do love, and they spare no efforts to obtain it. Because they do not go wild over good work at the opera or theatre, and make a noise with their hands and feet, Englishmen are supposed by Americans to be unappreciative or listless; but they are nothing of the kind, as you will find out for yourself if you sit beside one whom you know and talk with him between the acts. When judging an Englishman by his appearance and manner in a crowd, don't forget the old saying, "Still waters run deep."

The English are the most hospitable people alive; at any rate, they are as hospitable as the best Americans. An Englishman does not take all his acquaintances to his house, to smoke in the parlor and break for an evening the privacy of his family circle. He distinguishes sharply between acquaintances and friends,—a habit which Americans can afford to copy,—but he will take both to his club rather than disturb his family by taking home some man whom he likes, but who he knows will not seem interesting to the wife and the grown-up children. When he entertains, however, he does it in large-hearted style; he does not think his whole duty done when he gives a great party, invites everybody he knows, and fills his house so full that nobody can get through the crowd to see anybody else. He keeps "open house" if his means allow: to build a big house, furnish it elegantly, and then live in solitary

grandeur, as some Americans do, would never suit the well-bred Englishman who has any money. He is ceaseless in his endeavors to have something "going on," and any excuse is sufficient; it may be only a *musical* or a recitation, but he jumps at the chance, not so much for what the artists may do as to bring his friends together and entertain them. I have driven in spring and summer through some of the most delightful suburbs of great American cities and seen one fine place after another as quiet as if nobody lived there; in similar suburbs of London there would be a succession of parties playing tennis, croquet, or some other out-door game, and people constantly coming and going. The English hate the word "communist" as badly as my friend Colonel Robert Ingersoll hates the name of the Satanic majesty who he says doesn't exist, but nevertheless they seem to be full of the better communistic principle which causes a man to make the most of his money for the good of his fellow-man.

Another ridiculous American notion about the English is that they dislike Americans. This is worse than a mistaken notion: it is an unpardonable slander. The many American girls who have married Englishmen are highly popular in London society, and no decent American living in London is ever heard to complain of his treatment by the natives. Americans who visit England with letters of introduction to members of clubs or any circle of society are never allowed to feel not at home: "I know how 'tis myself." Intelligent Englishmen are as sympathetic and open-hearted as any people alive; if they were not, they could not have descended from the forefathers of their country and ours. They treat an American as if he were one of themselves, and not like a foreigner at all. They do not allude to the days of '76, or the tariff, or any other subject that might be annoying, but act just as if they thought he had come over for a rest and a change and they were going to help him along as much as they could. Some of them do ask a good many questions about America, but they don't do it offensively, and nearly all whom I've met have shown a real cousinly admiration for a good many things peculiar to this country. Of one thing I am very sure: the English admire us far more than they do any other people, although they have plenty of blood-relations, on the royal side, sprinkled about in Europe.

Frenchmen and Germans who come to this country say that anything is an excuse for a dinner here. Any one who goes about among the English people a little while is sure to learn how we came by this peculiarity. I have not been much in France and Germany, but, according to books written by men and women who have spent a great deal of time in those countries, hospitality stops, as a rule, at the dining-room door. There is no meanness about it: it is merely the national custom. But in England it is the rule to eat and drink; it is almost impossible to find an hour of the day at which you can go to an Englishman's house without being asked to refresh the inner man. It isn't a formal invitation, either, which you're expected to decline: the food and wine or tea are brought in and set on a little table rolled up in front of you before you have time to say you've just breakfasted, or are on your way to lunch or dine somewhere else. A lot of good fellows I know in

London seem to give up most of their time to finding some one to breakfast or lunch or dine with them. Suppose you want a general look at the lower middle class and upper lower class and take a railroad-trip in a third-class car, which is one place in England where you can safely speak to a man to whom you haven't been introduced. You sit down by a man who looks like a farmer, and begin to chat with him: within five minutes he will take from paper or box or basket a great pasty, or some boiled fowl, or meat and bread, and insist on your joining him. He always has twice as much as any one man can eat, and he meant to have twice as much when he started, so he could invite somebody to lunch with him.

Before I had been abroad at all I heard a great deal about "English airs:" so when I reached the old country I began to look for them. I didn't find them; and, although I have been over several times, I haven't found them yet. I stopped looking for them long ago, and I've relieved my mind to the fellows who told me about them. There are upstarts and pretenders and toadies in England, and they ape their betters; I think I have seen something of the kind on this side of the water, too. But there's no such nonsense among Englishmen who are sure of their position, be it high or low. It has been my fortune to see a great many Englishmen of title and position, though I've been only a sort of "mouse in the corner," and I don't know a more mild-mannered, unassuming set anywhere, not even in the United States. It is English custom not to introduce people who have not expressed a desire to know one another, but, on the other hand, there is the pleasant custom of speaking to any one whom you chance to meet in the house of a friend. As I am a restless sort of fellow, and quite fond of a chat, I used to avail myself of this privilege, and never was snubbed, but always met half-way. Occasionally I was paralyzed, afterwards, to learn that I had been acting in hail-fellow-well-met style with some person of consequence. Once it was the Duke of Teck, who is as near the throne as any one can be; but he was as affable as an old acquaintance, and it did not occur to him that he was being condescending, or anything of that sort, in chatting half an hour with a little stranger from America. Of course there are in England, as there are over here, a set of new-rich people who are trying to push their way upward, and if they have not the necessary amount of manners and intelligence they find themselves awfully snubbed. When the Englishman needs to be cool and distant, he can do it magnificently; but who that has had bores, parasites, and vulgar people try to attach themselves to him doesn't honor the Englishman for it?

In short, our English cousins are the nicest lot of people to be found anywhere outside of the United States, and it is a great pity that they are so far away that all of us cannot know them better. They differ from us no more than New England from the Pacific coast or the North from the South. Under the customs and manners which their own life has developed are the same big heart, good nature, kind spirit, hospitality, and energy that have made Americans all they are. Don't abuse them, dear reader or tourist, until you know them, and don't try to go among them until you can be introduced to two or three of them, either by

friends already there or by letters from friends here. If your company is worth as much as your room, you will have all the attention and consideration you want, and unless you fall into the too common faults of criticising them in their presence, flaunting the Stars and Stripes in their faces, and making the American Eagle scream himself hoarse in their ears, you will have nothing to regret and nothing to find fault with. Try it, and see if I am not right.

Marshall P. Wilder.

IDOL AFFECTIONS.

INSCRIBED TO ROBERT BROWNING.

Our idols are our executioners.—AMIEL.

God's care be God's.—BROWNING.

THERE is no day of all my years whereon
 I could not darken every sunniest hour
 With memories of my life that was, before
 God drew our distant paths near and more near.
 I know the Hand which broke before my face
 The idols I had wrought from clay and clothed
 In golden raiment, then within my heart
 Installed, as on an altar-shrine, to fall
 And crush me where I knelt,—more merciless
 Than mediæval priests who racked the saints,
 Yet spared their tortured frames when strength waxed low.
 Ah, then I thought my heart a sepulchre,
 Where only weeds and noisome things would dwell,
 In which no ray could ever shine again !
 Unto this place of graves thou didst not scorn
 To come, dear friend, bringing a jewelled lamp
 To hang above the empty shrine, and flash
 Its beams where now for weeds lie flowers which gained
 Their birth and growth in gardens of the soul.
 Like incense doth their perfume rise, by day
 And night, to heaven, as rise my prayers to God
 In thanks for such a matchless gift as thine,—
 Renewed like amaranth blooms as seasons roll.
 What can I do but trust the Hand which worked
 Such marvels for me when I prayed for death ?
 "God's care be God's : " I wait upon His will
 To lift all shadows from my life that shines.
 "God's care be God's : " I'll leave to Him His task,
 And, trusting in His love, forget to ask.

Clara Bloomfield-Moore.

SANCT MORITZ, August, 1887.

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE'S "ELIXIR OF LIFE."

HOW HAWTHORNE WROTE.

III.

[READERS of the preceding two articles have made some acquaintance with the youth Septimius, the gloomy-browed and questioning student of divinity and searcher after strange knowledge; with the mixture in his blood of the Puritan and the Indian, ever struggling with each other, and giving him no peace. They have had glimpses of the legends concerning his ancestry,—of the shadow of witchcraft that hung over it, of its former wealth and distinction in England; and they have tasted, as it were, of the mysterious herb-drink, rumored to possess life-giving qualities, though the source of it was more than suspected to be infernal. They have noted Septimius's singular persuasion that man was not originally made to die, but that the means exist around us (did we but know how to use them) to prolong physical life indefinitely; and they have seen how he seemed to be supported in this contention, not only by the alleged virtues of his aunt Nashoba's beverage, but by the vague hints as to a life-elixir let fall by the dying officer whom he slew, and who was found to be the last of the English branch of that race of which Septimius was the latest American representative. They have assisted at the discovery by Aunt Nashoba, in the dead youth's bosom, of a packet of documents which, it is insinuated, may contain that very recipe for a Drink of Immortality which Septimius had believed or hoped could be produced. Incidentally, they have gained some knowledge of Septimius's environment,—of his lonely house and hill-top, of his pretty step-sister Rose, of his friend the minister, of the sturdy yeoman Robert, and of Aunt Nashoba herself, who stands out in vivid colors from the rest. We are now to learn what use Septimius made of the packet, and in what manner the progress of his researches towards the end that he had at heart was helped and hindered by persons and events.

But in this tale of "The Elixir of Life," as in "Septimius," the active element is subordinate, and the speculative and meditative prevail. Even the characters are of less import than is the central idea round which they are grouped and in which they all become involved. It is a story which we must look into, not at; a criticism of life, not a portrayal of life itself. When we give to a group of persons a single controlling and absorbing interest, we come inevitably to regard them as practically but varying exponents of that interest: we study them less for their own sake as individuals than for the light which their diverse characters may throw upon the overruling theme. They become, in short, but a means to an end,—the end in this instance being an elucidation of the causes and objects of man's existence. Tom, Dick, and Harry, Jack and Jill, are of consequence to this problem only in so far as they may specifically contribute towards its general solution.

We are not to expect, therefore, in this story a rapid and exciting succession of episodes, but, rather, a slow and rich growth, gradually shaping itself to a symmetrical result. The beauties are to be found not so much in the accessories and excrescences of the creation as in the substance itself of it: as the glory of the mahogany-tree is to be sought not in its boughs and foliage, but in the deep hues and veinings of its interior structure. The interest of such a story is effective and lasting; whereas that of the tale of incident is transitory, however engaging for the moment. The latter penetrates no further than to the external memory; the former sends its influence into the soul, and there generates new thought.

Hawthorne, however, never suffered anything to leave his workshop with less than his last perfecting touch upon it; and the masterly modelling of the figures in "The Dolliver Romance" shows that he was far from intending to magnify his central idea at the expense of his characters: he would finish the latter with his utmost skill, while not the less keeping them so disposed as not to shut out the effect which he paramountly desired to produce on the reader. We see this in "Dolliver," which received his final revision; but in the preliminary studies (of which "The Elixir of Life" is one) it is not true to the same extent. For in these studies he was aiming to secure his grasp of the central idea first of all: until he was sure of that, he could not cast the characters in their perfected form. They are all, in a greater or less degree, tentative, experimental, and exaggerated: some (like Rose and the minister) are too faint; others, like Aunt Nashoba, are emphasized beyond the prevailing tone of the picture; some, perhaps, he would altogether have eliminated; and he might have found it expedient to introduce new ones not foreshadowed here. Nothing is settled, in fact, except the general tenor of the argument; and it is because there were so many possible arrangements of detail that he found the latter so hard to fix in their ultimate places.

Meanwhile, as we have already observed, it is just because the preliminary studies are not perfect that they are available for our present purpose. Were they as finished as is "The Scarlet Letter" or (so far as it goes) the "Dolliver" fragment, they would tell us nothing of how Hawthorne worked; but, being experiments merely, we can measure the bent and the calibre of his mind by the difference in direction and attainment between them and the finished product. Knowing what his music is, we can divine from these first rude and unordered sounds how he would beat his music out. And it must heighten, not diminish, our estimate of his genius to know that it was the kind of genius that fights to the bitter end the good fight, and not the kind of genius (if there be such a kind) that moves in the air and effects its results by a sort of immaculate conception.

Before resuming the direct quotations from the manuscript, I will summarize that part of the narrative that immediately follows the death of Francis Norton.]

While Septimius was sitting in his study, meditating gloomily over the tragedy, his step-sister Rose entered, and, seeing the sword and fusil and the other spoils of war, she recognized them as having belonged to the young officer,

and asked Septimius whether he had slain him. Septimius admitted it, and justified his action. "Is not the country mine to fight for?" he asked. "You sent Robert to the fight, with prayers for his success; and why not me as well?" Rose acquiesced, though sadly, and then went on to express her anxiety as to Robert's fate. Partly moved by her solicitude, and partly by the feverishness that this strange day had left in him, Septimius proposed to go in quest of him; "and indeed there was a quiet, solemn influence in Rose, a sort of domestic influence, that he had often felt, and that made him wish to escape her when he had anything wild in his mind. So he set forth, and travelled in the dust over the road where the battle had rolled, espying now and then a dead man lying in the dust, now the smoking ruin of a house, till in the twilight he beheld Robert approaching, weary, with blood on his face, and an English tower-musket on his shoulder. Both of these young men had taken a human life."

Robert related his adventures in the battle, but did not seem at all disturbed by the deed he had done; for "there are some natures that blood rolls off of, without staining it,—healthy, wholesome natures; others into which it sinks, as it were, and makes an indelible stain. Warriors should be of the former variety, and then their trade does them no moral injury. The mixture of race (as in Septimius) seems to be a crime against nature, and therefore pernicious."

At this point the author—partly, no doubt, in order to settle the matter in his own mind—proceeds to tell at some length the history of Septimius's ancestry. In so doing, he admits a large intermixture of legendary matter, observing that such gossip clusters round old truths, like gray lichens or moss, having its roots in what is true, and if ruthlessly separated, there remains only something very unpicturesque,—sapless; and that it is these fanciful things, these lichens and natural growth over dull truth, which, after all, constitute its value, as springing from whatever is rich and racy in it, and being a distillation from its heart, oozing out and clustering in a sort of beauty on the outside.

It seems, then, that the first ancestor of the Nortons in America was a personage enveloped in a sort of mysterious, heroic atmosphere. He was the very first white man to arrive in New England, just before the advent of the Pilgrims. And when the latter came, they heard reports of a certain powerful sachem, ruling over a wide extent of territory with a strangely intelligent sway. He showed, however, no desire to civilize his people, but only to improve, on its own plane, their savage life,—to keep them children of nature, but to expand and beautify their life within its own laws. This wise sagamore had also the reputation of being a wizard, able to raise tempests and to hold conclaves of demons, and was the source of the witchcraft that afterwards overspread the country; and the first settlers never heard the roar of the blast, at midnight, among the pine-trees, without shuddering at the thought that now Wachusett and his weird followers were sweeping through the air to their place of meeting.

The sagamore, at all events, was an inveterate enemy of the English, hating them with more than an Indian hatred, defending his forest kingdom against them, and annihilating their settlements. Meanwhile, he succeeded in reconciling the internecine feuds of his own people, and bound together the hitherto mutually hostile tribes into one great people. Among other attributes, he was said to possess a divine gift of healing, a knowledge of the roots and herbs of the forest, by means of which he could extract from them at his pleasure the deadliest poison or a medicine that could add years to the life of frail humanity. It was even asserted that he had by its means endowed himself with miraculous length of days, and lived for unknown years, never changing, never wrinkling, never a hair growing white. The tradition ran that he had suddenly appeared among the Indians, none knew whence, but with such majesty and wisdom that they accepted him as a direct messenger from the Great Spirit.

It is not surprising, however, that the Puritans failed to appreciate his good qualities; and, being unable to capture and convert him, they resolved to slay him. Accordingly, they watched their chance, fell by surprise upon the wigwam of the Prophet, and killed him, his wife, children, and household. But when they examined the dead body they found it to be that of a man of European

birth; and among the spoils were articles evidently brought from beyond the sea, showing that their owner must have originally been familiar with civilized state and luxury: though why he had given them up and betaken himself to the savage life, was a matter concerning which there were no grounds for conjecture.

One infant only escaped from the massacre, and was adopted by the victors, though it was said that the dusky mother had been the daughter of a family that traced its origin, not remotely, from the Principle of Evil. Nevertheless, the child was baptized and brought up in the Christian faith; and because among the plunder of the wigwam was found a small coffer curiously ornamented and strengthened with steel and bearing the arms of the English Nortons, this name was given to the half-breed baby. A beautiful crystal goblet was also found, and was said to have been preserved even to the epoch of our story. Rumor went that it had been used as the sacramental cup at a witch-communion and was supernaturally fortified against fracture.

The boy grew up idle and incapable, caring only for hunting, and negligent of the fertile tract, beneath the hill on which his father's wigwam had stood, which had been allotted him as his portion. Instead of building a house, he dug out a cave in the hill-side. He betrayed a fatal fondness for strong drink: in short, he was a credit to neither side of his ancestry. Finally, he was lost in a great snow-storm, and his body was found only in the ensuing spring.

Worthless though he was, he had been comely in his youth, and had won the hand of a pretty maiden, the daughter of one of the settlers. From this union sprang a son and a daughter, both persons of marked force, though widely different from each other. The boy was given a good education, and became a scholar of the first rank: he entered the ministry and reached the highest pinnacle of fame as a preacher. Great as was his influence, however, there were malign whispers about him, to the effect that he was not yet purged of the satanic strain of his forefathers. A tree, from beneath which he had launched a curse, was blasted, and never brought forth a leaf again; the power of his preaching was but a diabolical art taught him by Satan; he had slaughtered and scalped an Indian in King Philip's War; and in the latter part of his life he had tried to found a new sect, and had been excommunicated. There were stories, too, of his having inherited his father's craving for strong drink; that his wife, once beautiful, drooped and became a miserable woman, and on her death-bed shrunk from her husband's parting kiss; besides other tales, most of them doubtless colored by the jealousy and malevolence of his brethren.

As for the sister of this man, she was condemned and executed for witchcraft, and her brother, in preaching her funeral sermon, approved the sentence of execution, and related incidents to confirm its justice. Yet there was probably nothing worse in her than a survival of the Indian aspect and character. The secret of the mysterious herb-drink was said to have been retained in the family, and it was added that the clergyman's wife had died of drinking it in an immature stage of decoction.

Thus we may understand how it was that Septimius, the latest offspring of this strange family, should, in spite of his good sense and education, be liable to devote himself to the pursuit of an object which we choose to pronounce unattainable. But natural science, at that age, was able to affirm no such denial; and Septimius might be excused, therefore, for at least believing that human life had been shortened by man's neglect, whether the difference were one of ten years or of ten centuries.

The father of Septimius, it may be remarked, had married a second time, a widow with a daughter, Rose, who had thus become Septimius's step-sister. She was like a flower transplanted from a softer and sweeter soil; but she never quite amalgamated with Septimius and Aunt Nashoba. She lacked the strain of wildness and incompatibility that ran in their blood, and instinctively brought a standard of ordinary judgment to bear upon Septimius's ideas. But she kept pace with him to some extent in his studies, and was able, by teaching school, to earn the bread she ate. Septimius loved her, but was shy of her, feeling that a full communion with her would be like opening the dark and musty chambers of his heart, letting the air and sunshine into them, and so putting to flight the ghosts and weird fancies that haunted them. Septimius's mind instinctively

shrank from letting her clear, pure influence enter into it; as mystic plants hide themselves from the light of day.

Septimius, the day after the battle, in compliance with the wish of Francis Norton, wrote a letter to the lieutenant-colonel of his regiment, mentioning his death and burial, and giving an inventory of the property found in his possession. But he omitted to allude to the parchment envelope, telling himself that this had formed no part of Norton's intended legacy to the world. He had not as yet broken the seal; but he felt a dark, gnawing curiosity to know its contents. What fateful secret was hidden there? Even if he were to bury it in Norton's grave, would it not be disinterred years hence, and issue forth like a pestilence? or, were he to burn it, might not the same portent happen as in the case of an ancestor of his, who used to communicate with Satan by tossing little scraps of writing into his household fire, and a great dusky hand would clutch the missive, and be withdrawn, vanishing into the intensest heat? The truth was, Septimius had resolved to open the packet, and did but amuse his conscience with these suggestions.

The young man felt no horror of the grave upon the hill-top which he had dug and filled: indeed, he fancied a providential dispensation in the strange chance that had brought himself and his English kinsman together and delivered the packet into his hands. He soon resumed his walks along the ridge, therefore; and one day, looking down thence, he saw Rose and Robert talking together, in a manner that indicated a more than ordinary tenderness between them. A kind of jealousy of Robert entered into his heart,—a cold, shivering sense that this union would estrange them from himself, leaving him to wander away farther and farther into the remote wilderness of speculations, desolate and horrible if they came to naught, perhaps only the more so if they were realized. He became conscious of something to be guarded against in himself, and felt as if this sister, whom he was now about to lose, had been assigned to him as a safeguard. And he sent forth a lamentable and awful cry,—

"Rose! Rose! I want you, Rose!"

She and Robert looked up, startled; but Septimius had already repented of his appealing cry, and he only smiled and beckoned to them. They climbed the hill to join him; and then Robert told him that Rose and himself had promised themselves to each other, and that he had enlisted as a soldier in the war. Septimius acquiesced in the betrothal. In the talk that followed, Robert noticed the mound above Norton's body, and asked what it was; but Septimius replied, with an ambiguous smile, "No matter what it is: I have planted there something that may bear rich fruit, in due season." So the lovers departed together; and Septimius continued to pace the hill-top, and the people passing below marvelled to see a man keeping sentinel's watch there, when the enemy had retreated forever. On one side of him, as he walked, were the pines and the wild shrubbery amidst which his wizard sagamore ancestor had dwelt; on the other side the placid landscape of meadow, like the face of a calm, sympathizing friend. But seldom, either then or in the days that followed, did Septimius turn to the wide, simple countenance of Nature; a dense shrubbery of meditations, of which he scattered the seeds more and more as he walked, grew up along that often-trodden pathway, shutting out the view of external things, and making a cloistered wall as sombre as those where monks used to tread, keeping out the sun, and admitting only a damp, unwholesome atmosphere. There Septimius walked, and brooded over strange matters.

Spring passed, and summer came, and still Septimius had not broken the seal of the packet. Partly, perhaps, his hesitation was caused by the importance (as he fancied) of the secret it contained; partly—for there was a quality of keen sense in him, which continually criticised his extravagances—because he feared that it might all prove a ridiculous dream. He may have been influenced, moreover, by the consideration that he was violating the sanctity of the grave. But when at length he took the irrevocable step in the matter, it was in such a quiet, matter-of-fact way that it was done before he had time for any emotion.

He had promised to go into the woods with Aunt Nashoba and Rose, to gather the shrubs and herbs which the old lady made her famous drink of, and which were to be culled at a particular time of the moon. There being a few minutes while Aunt Nashoba was putting her kitchen in order, Septimius, all of

a sudden, went to the drawer, unlocked it, took in hand the blood-stained package, and broke the seal, before he consciously thought of what he was doing. He took out some dozen sheets of yellow, age-worn paper, written over with a strange, obscure handwriting. Something dropped out of the envelope and fell rattling upon the floor; he picked it up, and found it to be a small antique key, curiously wrought, and with intricate wards, and seeming to be of silver. In the handle was an open-work tracery, making the initials H. N. Septimius examined this key with great minuteness before proceeding further, wondering where could be the keyhole that suited it, and to what treasure it was the passport. [The fellow to this silver key, and to the lock corresponding with it, will be found in "Doctor Grimshawe's Secret."] Then, laying it carefully away in the drawer, he proceeded to inspect the manuscript.

This appeared to be a collection of deeds and documents of legal weight, with formal signatures and seals, of considerable antiquity and difficult chirography. Septimius could not make out much of their purport, nor did he feel much interest in them. But finally he came to a fold or two of manuscript, written with exceeding closeness and in a character that seemed at a first glance to be wholly illegible. Yet, whether it were by faith or revelation, Septimius, turning over these old yellow pages,—which, old as they were, were crisp, and had a kind of newness, as if nobody had ever fingered them before this day,—read, or fancied that he read, a single sentence, the purport of which stamped itself into his mind more from the mere inappositeness and absurdity of it than from any other cause. Indeed, he was by no means certain whether he had read this sentence or had only imagined it; and, at all events, it grew more distinct to his mind after he had laid the manuscript away than while he was actually trying to read it.

He had but glanced at it, when Aunt Nashoba's shrill screech sounded at his door. So he locked it up, just as he was beginning to be interested,—just as a light seemed to be gathering on the dark, mysterious page, that promised to enlighten it all, and make the faded letters, that once were black, shine like burnished gold.

As the three went into the woods together, it was singular to see the delight of Aunt Nashoba in snuffing the fragrance of the wild growing things; how the rugged, rough old pitch-pines seemed to have a charm for her and be old acquaintances; what a natural motion she had in making her way through the underbrush; in fact, she was like a half-domesticated animal, a wild-cat, that had been taught life-long to sit by the kitchen fire, coming to the wild haunts of its race, where it feels the powerful, blind, imperfect stirrings of its nature, and snuffs a delight which yet it cannot wholly know. Without any sense of the beauty of the woods, Aunt Nashoba stood and snuffed and snuffed with an animal delight. A strange look of wildness and—in spite of her rheumatism and manifold decrepitude—of possible agility came over her; so that it would have seemed almost natural had the stooping, slow-moving old thing suddenly taken the shape of a strange, ugly fowl, and gone scrambling and flapping away,—a sort of change customary with witches.

"Ah, Seppy," she said, "when I get out of my kitchen into the woods, methinks I am another woman, or rather no woman at all, but something that belongs here and never should think of kitchen chimneys nor meeting-houses. Rose, now, has no such feelings."

"Oh, yes," said Rose, "I love to come here and gather these delicate flowers, with their faint, sweet smell. They seem to have no kindred with the deep, dark forest where they grow. They are sad, never gay; being rightfully children of the sun, they live and die without having a glimpse of him."

"Delicate, do you call them?" said the old woman. "I tell you, girl, there are herbs here that, in hands that knew how to use them, would do wonderful things. And if Septimius inherited the gifts that belonged to his race, he would be able to come here and lay his hand on leaf and root that would be worth all the medicines doctors ever brewed. Even I—withered old thing, that have stewed my life out over the kitchen fire—even I have an instinct of things, and could fill my basket with herbs that would make me a young woman again. Ah, Seppy, I know more than I ever told you, and some day I'll give you the recipe for my drink. As for you, wench, it's not your inheritance."

They went on through the forest, Septimius gathering the herbs that Aunt Nashoba designated, and she, with an air and look of mystery, occasionally putting other things into her basket, winking and nodding at Septimius, and thereby needlessly adding to the ugliness of her visage,—so that you would have thought the two had laid a plot to poison the sweet and innocent Rose, and that this was the old woman's hideous exultation as she got together, one after another, the ingredients. She refused to let Rose add anything to her collection.

"No, no, girl," she said; "your touch would take the virtue out of the stuff. You're not born to it. Let me gather my own herbs, I tell you." Saying which, she poked into little recesses of shade, and under heaps of moss, and sometimes into hollow nooks of trees, and brought out vegetables as if she had put them away there long years ago and knew just where they were to be found.

At length Rose, still looking for buds of beauty, wandered apart from the others, and then Aunt Nashoba beckoned to Septimius with a look so intelligent and full of meaning that the young man was half afraid of her. She told him that she was growing old, and that it was time she imparted to him a secret which she would not have die with her.

"It is not a secret on my conscience," she added. "I have no murder to confess, though they say my medicines hurried some people off sooner than they would otherwise have gone. No, it is the secret of my drink that I want to tell you. Here are all the herbs and mysteries within reach of us now, and I can show you where they grow and how to gather them. They can make you live forever: a thousand years certain, and forever for aught I know."

"Forever, Aunt Nashoba! and yet you talk of dying already?"

"Ah, Seppy, there is something lost out of the recipe and so it has not its ancient virtue. But with your book-learning and your Indian descent you'll find it out, though I never could. And so it takes you a year, or a lifetime, what matter? the end pays for all."

But Septimius, doubting, probably, the efficacy of the old lady's beverage, put off the revelation. "My mind is very busy on a certain matter," he said. "Let me finish that, and I'll take up this. But not now."

"Well, Seppy, you'll live to repent it," quoth Aunt Nashoba, shaking her head, and looking so darkly intelligent that Septimius was half afraid of her again. "This is not my secret, but your great-grandfather's, and his father's; and as to whom he had it from, there are different stories. But take your own way; and if the thing dies with me, it is not my fault."

They returned home, but various interruptions kept Septimius from further examination of the manuscript during the day. For a man no sooner sets his heart on any object, great or small, be it the lengthening out of his life interminably, or merely writing a romance about it, than his fellow-beings, and fate and circumstances to back them, seem to conspire to hinder, to prevent, to throw in obstacles, great or small, as the case may be. In the original composition and organic purpose of the world there is certainly some principle to obviate great success, some provision that nothing particularly worth doing shall ever get done, so evidently does a mistiness settle between us and any such object, and harden into granite when we attempt to pass through it; so strangely do mocking voices call us back, or encouraging ones cease to be heard when our sinking hearts need them most; so unaccountably, at last, when we feel as if we might grasp our life-long object by merely stretching out our hand, does it all at once put on an aspect of not being worth our possession; by such apparently feeble impediments are our hands subtly bound; so hard is it to stir to-day, while it looks so easy to stir to purpose to-morrow; so strongly do petty necessities insist upon being compared with immortal desirablenesses, and almost always succeed practically in making us feel that they are of the most account. This being the case, Septimius had not such individual cause of grumbling as he supposed on the score of the little incidents that assailed him that day.

[The above abstract, though for the most part greatly condensed, generally retains the language of the original. We will now resume our uncondensed quotations.]

One of the incidents was a visit from a lank and bony old patriarch, who came to get a remedy from Aunt Nashoba for his rheumatism, which lasted longer into the summer than had been its wont; and, his errand being done, he hobbled familiarly into Septimius's study, to talk of the war (a theme of which the young man was now heartily weary), and to tell stories of other wars, in which the old man had been personally engaged,—Indian and French,—and where he had contracted this self-same rheumatism by sleeping, as he said, in the beds of running streams. Then, going farther and farther back, along the line of times gone by, the old man talked of Septimius's forefathers, telling of their peculiarities and oddnesses, with hard Yankee shrewdness; and how they were a people that never mixed up kindly with others, either because the Indian or the devil was in them; and how the old man had heard that there was something strange in them, some singular property, so that if the witch-woman had not been hanged, it was said, she would have lived forever; and that there did go a story that the great preacher (whom the old man had heard preach, when he was a little child) only escaped the same doom by killing himself; for somehow he had toughened himself so that time and disease never would have sufficed to kill him. And, staring Septimius in the face with his bleared eyes, he said that he had a look of him, he being a dark, cloudy-browed man, wrapt up in himself; and he told traits of him which he had heard babbled round the fire in his age-long distant infancy, in which Septimius fancied that he could see his own characteristics. And he was depressed and appalled by the idea that he had really been extant nobody knows how long, repeated identically from generation to generation, and that this was the sort of interminable life he should find, and the other only a dream. And still the old man was going on, wandering and stumbling among traditions, and wild, dreary, sordid stories, and would probably have found no end,—when luckily there came along the road a neighbor with a wagon, beholding whom, the old gentleman feebly hailed him from the window and (all to save his rheumatism from further pedestrianism) obtained a lift to the village.

[This patriarch is a portrait of a real old codger who used to pester Hawthorne at the Wayside in the early years of the civil war, coming up day after day with a fresh batch of rumors and commentaries. In the references to Septimius's ancestry there are often reminiscences of traditions handed down in Hawthorne's own family.—Compare the above passage with that in "Septimius," page 284.]

When again left alone, Septimius took forth the envelope, and held it a moment in his hand, looking at the hole through which the deadly bullet had gone, and at the life-blood which besmeared the package, as if a life had been the seal and had been destroyed in the opening it. He unfolded the package, and, though the twilight was now darkening into the low-browed room, pored into it,—into its strange old mystery, so bewildering even to look at; and indeed the darkening twilight was precisely the fit medium in which to study that bewitched, mysterious,

bullet-penetrated, blood-stained manuscript, the secrets of which might be expected to fade under the light of noon or any glimpse of the natural sun, and only to shine out in lurid light, phosphorescent, glimmering, when other means of seeing and interpretation were withdrawn. Soon, however, it grew so dark that the light of the summer moon, which was nearly at the full, succeeded to the twilight, and Septimius held the old pages in it, straining his young eyes to distinguish one of the scraggy, untraceable, crabbed letters from another; but in vain, the whole hue of the page being of so dark a yellow, and of the letters so reddish a brown, and sometimes faded quite out, that the moonshine that often had served well enough to read a printed page, at hours when Aunt Nashoba deemed him snug in bed, now saw little more than an indistinguishable confusion. He, having neither lamp nor candle, of which the strict economy of the house was very sparing, lighted with flint and steel one of a heap of pitch-pine knots which he had heaped up in the chimney-corner with a view to one of those thoughtful illuminations which students often feel, impelling them to rise at midnight and take a sip out of their books,—as people of an unhealthy thirst cannot wait till day to sip wine or brandy. With a succession of these flaming, flickering, smoking, brilliant, yet obscure torches, he pored over the manuscript, holding the torch in one hand, and sometimes dropping its hot, melted pitch over the page, burning his own fingers, trying to make his way through the mysterious old Gothic record, like one who should wander through old intricate vaults of a weird building with the same kind of smoky and bewildering light. It seemed to have more efficacy, indeed, than a steadier light; for just as the last of his torches expired he caught a glimpse of the same sentence, which he now saw did not follow in regular succession of words, but was sprinkled about, as it were, over one of the pages, so as only to be legible, like a constellation in the sky, when you chanced to bring those words into the proper relation with one another. It was to this effect: "Plant the seed in a grave, and then wait patiently for what shall spring up,"—and then again,—"wondrous rich and full of juice." Then the pine torch flickered and went out, and Septimius, not well satisfied with what he had achieved, but willing to rest upon it and see if the mysterious fragment would develop any meaning, put the manuscript in his desk and went to bed.

[Here follows the introduction of a new and important character, Sibyl Dacy. She appears also in "Septimius," but the portrayal there is quieter and less pronounced.]

Septimius was on the hill-top, one afternoon towards sunset, treading to and fro over the now well-worn path, and letting the wind breathe in among his thoughts and blow the more unsubstantial of them away, when, as he reached the eastern extremity of his sentinel-walk, and turned to retrace his steps westward, he saw a feminine figure approaching him. At first he thought it might be Rose, and was, to say the truth, a little offended at her intruding; for there was a quality in poor Septimius that kept him in the middle of a circle

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which delicate natures could not step into, and which duller ones, if they attempted it, found vacant of him who seemed to be there. But this figure turned out to be that of a girl slighter and slenderer than Rose, and, as Septimius thought on a nearer view, by no means so pretty or so pleasing. Such as she was, however, she continued to advance, and so did Septimius, until, as chance ordered it, they met close by that little spot of ground where Francis Norton lay under the sods, with Septimius's poor attempt to set a flower-patch over him.—*N.B. Septimius and the girl first pass each other without speaking, then, step by step, mutually turn back; and she pauses by the grave,—she glancing askance. The girl should throw out uncertain hints, as if she knew what had happened.*—The strange girl stooped down, apparently attracted by these flowers. After examining them a little, she began to pull them up, one after another, and fling them away.

"You seem not to like my flowers," said Septimius; "yet I have taken some pains to set them out and make them grow on this thirsty hill-top."

In truth, he was inclined to be offended; for his sombre fancy had indulged itself much here in thinking that Francis Norton would reappear in these flowers, giving a partly human life to them, putting his own characteristics into them, deepening their colors, and betokening, by some rich and delicate odor, forgiveness of the deed that had laid him there; holding forth a flower, perhaps, for him to give to the woman he should love. Septimius had no ill will against the young man he slew, and had indeed come to think (such was his egotism) that it was not amiss, having done his errand so well, that Francis Norton had here lain down to rest.

"Nay, do not pull up any more!" he exclaimed, as the girl still weeded up the flowers.

"Pooh! what do you know of the flowers that ought to grow here?" answered she, in a pettish kind of way. "They are not the right ones!"

"They are the prettiest to be found in our woods and fields," said Septimius; "and besides, fair lady, if I choose to set violets, wood-anemones, asters, golden-rod, or even buttercups, on the spot, I fancy, by your leave, it concerns no one but myself."

The girl looked up and laughed, in rather a flighty way, inasmuch that Septimius began to suspect that the oddities of her behavior were to be accounted for by a touch of insanity: a pitiful thing, if it were so; for he now saw that her face, though pale and lacking fulness, was pretty, and had a singular capacity of vivid expression, her intelligence seeming to glow not merely through her eyes but her whole face. And yet, full of meaning as her face looked, he could not in the least tell what it meant.

"Concern only you!" she exclaimed, still laughing. "Why, I have come on purpose to find the place! And I tell you the right flower is not here."

And again she bent down, and plucked a leaf or two, and looked closely at their shape, and rubbed them between her fingers, to express any odorous juice that might be in them, but again said, in a discon-

solate sort of way, like a pouting child, "It is not here. I wonder whether it will spring up! and when!"

"What flower are you looking for?" asked Septimius.

"It has no name," answered the girl; "or, if it has one, it is a very long, learned name, and I have forgotten it."

"Is the flower beautiful?" asked Septimius.

"That is as you happen to fancy it," said the girl. "Well, it is not here; but I will look for it again. Perhaps it is not time yet."

She sat a little while without speaking, but drooping over the flowers, looking faint, as if she were going to sink down; and Septimius, stooping down to see what was the matter, found that tears were flowing out of her eyes. Then there came sobs; and suddenly she burst into a passionate fit of sorrow and weeping, a sort of flurry and hurricane, which astonished Septimius, who could make nothing of it nor knew how to allay it. It was, fortunately, of very short duration, and before it was well over the strange girl began to laugh, or rather giggle, turning her mobile face upon him with such an expression that he knew less than ever what to make of her; though I suppose that those accustomed to the freaks of nervous and hysterical women would have seen nothing very odd in it.

"I was thinking how to comfort you," said Septimius; "but there seems little need."

"Oh, not a bit," said the girl. "I am in excellent spirits, as you see, and was only crying a little by way of watering the spot where the flower is to grow. Different things require different modes of cultivation."

"And I suppose these smiles and this bright expression are to serve by way of sunshine," said Septimius, trying to enter into her mood, though he knew not what to make of it. "It will be a rare flower, when it grows. What will it be like?"

Without answering, the girl arose, and seemed preparing to go away. But Septimius, not willing to lose sight of her without gaining some hold upon her, and thinking, too, that she might be one of those strange anomalous vagrants who often turn up at a country house, and appear to be wandering wide and wild, without any hold upon the community,—beggars, insane people, idiots, adventurers of all kinds, castaways, people from the most outlandish and remote places, East Indians, religion-crazed preachers, missionaries, jugglers, outlaws of themselves, wildly running away from the recollection of murder, mind-murderers, sharpers,—all such people, who have somehow broken the chain which circumstances twine to confine almost all individuals in one place and circle of associates,—broken it and roamed wildly at large, yet serving in their wild way to tie together by slender ligaments distant parts of the world and places that have no other connection,—thinking this, Septimius, partly from humanity and compassion and partly from curiosity (which seldom stirred in him, but was now awake),—partly, too, because there was a certain magnetism in the girl's action upon him,—put out his hand to detain her.

"Are you going far?" he said.

She avoided his touch with a shudder. "Far? No," said she. "Home, to be sure! What strange questions you ask!"

If he let her go, so uncertain seemed her mood, she might go no farther than the quiet brook which flowed between Septimius's fertile field and that of a neighbor; and there she might be found drowned in the shallow pool that it formed,—a death that forlorn maidens seem to affect,—especially when the water has its summer warmth in it.

"Your home is nigh, then?" said Septimius.

"You may stand on the brow of the hill, if you like," she said, "and see my home; but do not try to touch me again. Perhaps you may find me not a thing of flesh and blood."

"If so," remarked Septimius, "you may as well vanish into the air; otherwise, I give you fair warning, I shall follow you, be it far or near, till I see you in charge of your friends."

"You are perfectly welcome," said the girl, pettishly; "only I fear you will have a long ramble, like a farmer who chases Puck or a will-o'-the-wisp. You have no such things here; but I am of the same substance."

"Will you ever come back?" asked Septimius.

"Often! always!" said the girl, looking back and laughing. "I shall haunt that hill-top."

[Septimius sees her enter Robert's house, and afterwards he asks Rose about her. She tells him that the girl is one Sibyl Dacy, a relative of some English gentleman, not a combatant, now in Boston. Her health being very delicate, means have been used to induce her to come into the country, and Robert, having to bring a message hither from the camp, had it in charge to accompany her, and his mother, old Mrs. Heyburn, had taken her to board. "I think," adds Rose, "she has had an experience of some kind, and has a kind of sibyllic wisdom, and a sort of sacredness of sorrow. If she will let me be her friend, I gladly will be."]

By dint of continued poring over the musty manuscript, Septimius began, after a while, to see some reasonable prospect of attaining to the interpretation of it, from beginning to end. So uncouth and shapeless did the characters appear, they resembled undefined germs of thought as they exist in the mind before clothing themselves in definite terms; yet Septimius sometimes was sensible of a splendor in these undeciphered sentences, like that of the dim star-dust in the remote sky, which a telescope of sufficient power resolves into vast globes of light. The document proved to be written in a singular mixture of Latin (not of the purest style) and ancient English, with an occasional scrap of Greek. Invariably, too, when the author seemed on the verge of some utterance that would illuminate his whole subject, and make all the seeming obscurities that Septimius had hitherto puzzled over blaze out to vivid meaning, and wreath themselves together from beginning to end by a chain of light, its golden links all in a flame, there came in an interval of cryptic writing, a touch of dense, impenetrable darkness, on the other side of which

appeared a disconnected radiance which could not be brought into relation with what had gone before.

Leaving, for the present, the cryptic passages apart, the young student wrote out fair, in the stiff and broad chirography of his own day, as much as he found it possible to decipher. The result was not in the least like what he had expected; nor, had he been in a natural frame of mind, could he have thought that these things, however true many of them were, were either so novel or so momentous that the passage of them from one possessor to another need have required so much machinery or been accompanied by the precious sacrifice of a human life. But Septimius's mind was not in a healthy state; and the great war, in which the whole country was so desperately engaged, had an influence on him, modified by the morbidness and extravagance of his own character. For he, like all others, drank of the prevalent passion and excitement, drained the cup that was offered to everybody's lips, and was intoxicated in his own peculiar way. He walked so much the more wildly in his own course because the people were rushing so enthusiastically in another. In times of revolution, or whatever public disturbance, even the calmest person is to some degree in an exaggerated and unnatural state, probably without suspecting it: there is enthusiasm, there is madness, in the atmosphere. The decorous rule of common life is suspended; absurdities come in and stalk unnoticed. Madmen walk abroad unrecognized; heroic virtue marches among us, with majestic step; vices, too, and great crimes, creep darkly, or stalk abroad; woman, likewise, catches the wild influence, and sometimes, flinging aside the fireside virtues as of little worth, is capable of crimes that men shudder at, of virtues and valor that he can never imitate, of deeds and thoughts that she would, a little time ago, have died to anticipate. The disenfranchised soul exults in losing its standpoint; old laws are annulled; anything may come to pass; miracles are on the same ground as the commonest occurrences. So, in respect to Septimius, his common sense, of which he had no small portion, had no such fair play with his wilder characteristics as it might have had in quiet and ordinary times,—when, besides, there were the throes attending the birth of a new epoch in the world; and among seething opinions and systems, and overturned and deposed principles, Septimius had nothing fixed and recognized with which to compare his own pursuit and recognize its absurdity. Thus much we say, that this wild young thinker may not look too ridiculous in the errors to which a solitary pursuit led him.

[Compare the above passage with "Septimius," pp. 298, 299.]

So he continued to brood over his musty manuscript, to hide it under lock and key as if it were a murder-secret, and to pick out from its heap of moss-grown ideas such nuggets of what he fancied to be gold as he could contrive to shape into an aspect of definite meaning. We have in our possession a few portions of it, as transcribed by Septimius, and mean to present them to the reader, whom doubtless, after all that we have said about the manuscript, they will surprise as much

as they did Septimius; though we can hardly hope that they will be received, as by him, as golden nuggets from a mine of thought, further digging into which would reveal inestimable treasure. They took the aspect of certain rules of life, precipitated from the rich solution of the essay, and crystallized into diamonds; and whereas many of these rules had a mean aspect in themselves, and seemed to concern low matters of dietetic, Septimius took it for granted that this more obvious meaning was of comparatively no importance, and that they had a symbolic value, which he should by and by discover. These were but golden beads, strung on something more valuable than themselves; and what that precious string might be, the discovery of the cipher would reveal.

Julian Hawthorne.

(To be continued.)

FROM BEYOND THE SEA.

THINK not, because the changing floods divide
My face from thine, that memory grows cold.
Dost fear the Past ends as a tale is told,
Or, while we journey, keeps not by our side?

Each thing we suffer, be it joy or pain,
Leaves us its image in a lasting mould:
It may have passed unmarked,—it shall remain
Long as our very selves together hold.

So, though we seem, to the light outward gaze,
Only to be enduring life's command,
Only to squander harnessed heart and hand
In a dull dynasty of useful days,—

E'en then our soul turns in the lull of strife
To look upon some secret inward seal
Stamped long ago, an earnest to reveal
The thin far landscape of an idler life.

I cannot count these images in me,
For Time hath not yet bid me know them all;
Yet from their ranks how fair a one of thee
Comes like a blessing, when on thee I call!

And when perchance long days shall cast a pall
Over my graver self, I'll cross the sea
Upon the golden wings of gayer thought,
Setting the prose of day by day at naught,
And in thy vision once again be free.

Owen Wister.

WESTERN MORTGAGES.

THERE is no form of security in vogue to-day concerning which there is such a wide diversity of opinion as that which forms the subject of this article.

On the one hand may be found those, and among their number some of the shrewdest and best-informed financiers of the day, who regard these mortgages as the safest and most stable securities to be had, such securities as a widow may wisely choose in which to invest the little fund provided by the insurance on her husband's life, or in which a guardian may put the little all of his helpless charges; while on the other hand there is a large portion of this community that never did—and some of them probably never will—see any merit whatever in them.

Let us consider wherein these so-called Western mortgages differ from those with which we are all so familiar, and in the process we may be enabled not only to discover the grounds for this great variance of opinion, but also to form an intelligent judgment of their real merits, to discern wherein they are strong, under what circumstances they are weak, and finally to comprehend the great and important uses they are well calculated to subserve.

It should be distinctly understood that what are technically termed Western mortgages are not merely mortgages on Western property as distinguished from mortgages made on lands in the Eastern and Middle States, but are a part of an entirely new and distinct system of investment, a system which, while borrowing all the elements of strength and safety involved in the very nature of all good mortgages, has added thereto many improvements born of much experience, all looking to the greater safety and convenience of the investor.

In order to arrive at a full comprehension of this system, let us start on common ground, and consider first the nature and use of a mortgage, and then see wherein this new class differs from those we are accustomed to.

It will help us to consider the subject more logically to understand just what elements enter into the constitution of a good mortgage. A mortgage is defined to be "a grant or conveyance of an estate or property to a creditor for the security of debt, and to become void on payment of it." From this definition it may be plainly seen that there are three absolute essentials to a good mortgage.

First, as it is a grant or conveyance of an estate or property, this grant or conveyance must be made in an apt and sufficient way, and with the use of proper technical forms.

Second, in order that a good and sufficient title should pass to the mortgagee, such a title must be clearly deduced and shown to be in the grantor or mortgagor at the time of making the mortgage; and,

Third, as this grant or conveyance is made as *security* for a debt, it is a question of vital importance to determine accurately whether

the property pledged possesses sufficient intrinsic value to adequately secure it.

But there is still one other quality or condition necessary to a perfectly good mortgage, not comprehended in the above definition, and that is, it must be what is termed a *first* mortgage, and to insure this requires—

Fourth, evidence that it is the first lien or charge on the specific piece of property given as security, and that consequently there are no prior mortgages, conveyances, judgments, or liens of any kind whatsoever, in any way affecting the premises in question.

In order that the first and second of these requirements may receive proper attention, the services of a careful, precise, and skilful lawyer must be obtained, one familiar with this abstract branch of the law, and accustomed to the patient research necessary to deduce, from the records and papers produced, the evidences of a good and sufficient title.

To properly determine the third essential a very different order of talent is required: the property offered as security must be examined by one familiar with the value of lands whether in city or country, and, in the case of buildings, one who can accurately determine the value of these in any particular locality, making proper allowance for the cost of labor and material.

Finally, in order to make sure of the fourth essential, the joint services of a lawyer and certain public officials, the keepers of the public records, including the Recorder or Register of Deeds, and the clerks of the several courts, are required.

In short, therefore, in order to secure an ordinarily good first mortgage, all of these four essentials or requirements must exist together; that is to say, the papers must be properly prepared, the title correctly examined, the value of the intended security determined with precision, and the final search for liens carefully and intelligently ordered by the lawyer and made by the officials. A failure in any one of these respects would result in the obtaining or placing of a bad mortgage.

While, perhaps, there is no place in the world where "conveyancing" has been done more skilfully and carefully than in the city of Philadelphia, while its land-lawyers have been famous the world over, yet it is within the experience of all, that most serious losses have occurred to investors from a failure in one or more of the above requirements. Thus, mortgages have been declared to be void, or have been postponed to later encumbrances, because of defect or insufficiency in form, or by reason of defective acknowledgment;¹ the most eminent lawyers have made mistakes of judgment as to questions of title or lien;² Trust Companies have been surcharged for negligence in allowing themselves to be imposed upon as to the value of the security offered;³ and officials have failed to certify judgments and mortgages,

¹ See the following cases: *Corpman v. Baccastow*, 84 Pa. State Reports, p. 363; *Myers v. Boyd*, 96 Pa. State Reports, p. 427; *Sankey v. Hawley*, 118 Pa. State Reports, p. 80.

² See case of *Watson v. Muirheid*, reported in 57 Pa. State Reports, p. 161.

³ See report of *Barton's Estate* in 11 Weekly Notes of Cases, p. 561.

and have not been held liable on their bonds because the error was not discovered and suit brought until some time after the false certificate was issued;¹ and in all of these cases the *holder of the mortgage suffered the loss*. Again, there have been cases where parties have suffered loss who have erred in no one of these particulars, but, through error, one mortgage has been marked satisfied of record instead of another.² And finally, in addition to all these, there have been still other losses resulting to unfortunate investors by the imposition on them of forged mortgages.

While these errors and wrongs and consequent losses have been comparatively few in number, still in the great multitude of transactions they would creep in from time to time, and people who could ill afford it have been the sufferers, until finally, as a means of meeting a great public necessity, the Title Insurance Companies have been formed, to insure people against possible loss by reason of mistake or failure in any or all of the requirements first, second, and fourth above enumerated; and these companies have added a very great element of security in these respects. But, important as this improvement has been, no such company has ever undertaken to insure against loss that might result from failure to observe the third essential above mentioned,—that is, against loss resulting from insufficiency in value of the intended security. Thus, a ten-thousand-dollar mortgage might be given on a thousand-dollar property, and one of these companies give its usual policy of insurance, and the unfortunate mortgagee lose nine-tenths of his money, because the papers were all right, the title correct, and no liens were left uncertified, and the Title Company was not responsible as to the question of value. Important as all the other requirements are, one who is thoroughly familiar with this whole business would be compelled to admit that the greatest, the most real, constant, and pressing danger in the case of all ordinary mortgages has not been guarded against yet, and that all people who have to do with this class of securities, Trust Companies, guardians, executors, and private trustees, are buying mortgages on outlying properties in the city of Philadelphia (and this is true of all the large Eastern cities) that are utterly lacking in this most essential requirement,—viz., adequate value or security,—a condition of things which has continued for a long time without hope of betterment, because of the enormous amount of capital constantly seeking investment, and the comparative dearth of securities compelling investors to accept the best they can get. Another panic like that of 1873, which for a time seemed to destroy all value in real estate, would bring about a condition of things more deplorable than that which then existed from a similar cause, because the evil is now more wide-spread.

To recur again to common experience with the ordinary mortgages, there are a number of other little matters that it is important to consider. Thus, if a mortgage has been well and securely placed in the first instance, still there are many incidents about this favorite mode

¹ See case of *Owen v. Western Saving Fund*, reported in 97 Pa. State Reports, p. 47.

² See case of *Binney v. Brown*, reported in 116 Pa. State Reports, p. 169.

of investment that require attention and sometimes occasion considerable trouble, anxiety, and loss. There is uncertainty as to just when the interest will be paid, and much vexatious delay, often resulting in a threatened suit in foreclosure, merely to bring the interest. This involves the employment of attorneys, and the necessary outlays for their services. Questions of insurance, taxes, and other municipal liens are constantly arising and demanding attention, and often occasioning loss. Thus, while a mortgage which was a first lien could not be discharged by a sale or proceedings under any subsequent claim for taxes or municipal liens, yet if a sheriff's sale became necessary to enforce collection of the mortgage debt, the amount due for all subsequent taxes and other municipal claims must first be deducted from the proceeds of sale, and, where the margin of security was narrow, this often entailed serious loss. But perhaps one of the most annoying circumstances about this method of investment that formerly obtained, and still exists, was and is the great difficulty of investing at once the precise sum constituting the fund for investment, and if this fund was of unusual size a portion of the same was almost invariably left uninvested, thus losing interest. Suppose the sum was \$1750, \$4500, \$6000, or \$11,000, the probabilities would be that only \$1500, \$4000, \$5000, or \$10,000 would be invested, and this after some delay, while the odd amounts would be left either at very small interest or without any.

It is a little digression at this point, but it may be well to say, in passing, that one of the immediate uses to which the Western mortgage system could be well applied is the investment of these many small balances held by our Trust Companies and other fiduciaries, as securities can always be obtained in either large or small amounts.

Having seen some of the drawbacks to what were unquestionably the most favored investments, let us now consider how this new system of Western mortgages came into vogue, and how it was gradually improved so as to obviate these difficulties which have been pointed out. And first the old law of supply and demand came into play. The demand for capital to be secured by first-class mortgages being far less in all the Eastern centres than the supply, the first result was a rapid decline in the rates of interest demanded and paid in those centres for the use of capital. But when, in spite of this decline in rates, an adequate supply of securities could not be obtained, prudent investors began to look about for opportunities to invest their capital where it was more in demand, and where they could not only obtain better rates, but, what was of more consequence, where they could insist upon the pledge of more adequate security. During all this time the West was gradually growing up, the cry to the young men to "Go West!" had gone forth, and the brightest and most enterprising of the youth of all sections of the older East had gone to this land of promise. They called upon their parents and friends for help to improve their farms or to increase their business, and gave mortgages to secure the advances. Money was so valuable in the West, and would command such large returns, that they were enabled to pay liberally and punctually for the use of this capital. The knowledge of this mode

of investment gradually spread, and finally a regular business of sending capital from the East to the West grew up. Many honorable firms engaged exclusively in this new calling, such firms being generally composed of a good Western man, who was well acquainted in his section with those who wanted money, and a corresponding Eastern man, equally well acquainted with those who had capital to spare. This business was done honestly and carefully. The investors were almost invariably acquainted with and thoroughly trusted those who loaned out their money, and the result was that this business grew with great rapidity and was phenomenally successful. The great insurance companies and other corporations that needed the income of invested funds for the prosecution of their business soon turned their eyes in this direction, and built up the great cities of the West by their large advances of capital that went into the erection of fine buildings, and finally, when the great and universal failure to supply the demand for securities in the Eastern centres that has been spoken of above occurred, then the investing public generally turned their eyes westward for relief, and in a comparatively short time the business that was already in existence in a limited way took upon itself new conditions to adapt it to the demands made upon it, and the modern system of Western mortgages was born. Most of the men engaged in the business had acquired a plentiful stock of experience; they understood all its phases, were familiar with Western values, and for their own protection always insisted upon the most ample margin of security. Titles were very simple, running back in a few removes to the United States government; the system of dividing the public domain into regular rectangular sections of one mile square, and the subdivision of these into quarters, which quarters were again quartered, all in perfect rectangles of forty acres each, all helped to simplify matters, by making mistakes of description almost impossible. The result was that this vast business, extending into the millions, was done so carefully and successfully that, while these earlier loans were all unguaranteed, yet practically no losses of either principal or interest occurred. But when, about seven to ten years ago, this great accession of business came, many Eastern people who were entirely unacquainted with the Western loaning agents began to invest their money, and it was soon seen that the confidence of these investors would have to be obtained in other ways than by the personal acquaintance which formerly prevailed. Large amounts of capital were then aggregated into corporations formed for the express purpose of carrying on the investing business, and, instead of the former guarantees based on personal knowledge and established character, corporate guarantees, backed up by a large capital, were given to the investor. Instead of giving one single bond with a promise to pay the principal at the expiration of a given time, with interest at the rate agreed upon in regular semi-annual instalments, a principal note with ten or more smaller interest notes or coupons, maturing respectively every six months, was given, and when the payment of these at maturity was guaranteed by the investing corporation, this old original form of a security, with all the virtue and strength that attached to the old form of bond and mortgage, became

also practically a coupon bond, with all the incidents pertaining to such bonds.

The original investing companies were based upon the established business of old firms that had long been engaged in this work, and they grew and developed gradually, until some have attained enormous proportions and acquired great financial strength. They have gathered about themselves the most competent lawyers to prepare papers and to pass on questions of titles and liens, the most trustworthy and experienced examiners as to the values of the houses and lands offered as security, and careful and painstaking men to look after all questions of taxes, insurance, etc., and the collection of the interest and the principal when due. Knowing through their local agents the men who applied for loans, forgeries were almost impossible. Preparing all papers themselves and examining all titles and all properties as to value, and, above all, being able to insist upon much larger margins of security than could be demanded in the East, they were able to do one thing that had never been done before. They were not only able to furnish to every investor that most desirable and stable form of security, a bond secured by first mortgage on a specific piece of property, they not only could do what the modern Title Companies did,—viz., guarantee the title, and that the mortgage was sufficient in form and a first lien,—but they could do, and did, what has never been done before, they absolutely assured the investor that the value of the mortgaged property was adequate to secure the debt, and they fully protected him against all loss by reason of subsequent taxes, municipal liens, insurance, etc. In short, they did what had never been attempted before, what no company would dare to do now, with a large proportion of the ordinary mortgages that pass current in the East: they guaranteed the payment of the interest at maturity, and the repayment of the principal when due, or within a reasonable time (generally two years) thereafter, if foreclosure became necessary, the interest in such case to be paid semi-annually to the investor, whether collected by the company or not.

This general guarantee covered every contingency. The investor did not need to inquire whether the papers were in proper form, the title correct, the value adequate, or the mortgage a first lien. There was no longer any waiting for interest; the coupons therefor could be deposited in any bank the day they were due, and collected without cost or delay. There is no occasion for anxiety in the case of a possible foreclosure, for the guaranteeing company assumed all the responsibility of that, and paid the mortgage debt to the investor, whether it was collected or not.

The holder of a good Western mortgage not only has all the security that always attaches to a good bond and mortgage, freed from all the causes of anxiety and care and possibility of loss mentioned above, but, by reason of its form described above, he practically holds a coupon bond, with all its attendant advantages, but without the usual fluctuations in value, readily convertible, and, when of the proper character, freely taken as collateral for temporary loans.

The investor has only one duty to perform, withal a very important one,—viz., to determine once for all whether the company he is dealing with, by virtue of the character and ability of its officials, its established

methods of business, the amount of its capital, and the availability of its assets, is able to give him a good and sufficient guarantee. That there are such companies, is shown by the fact that hundreds of millions of dollars have been thus invested, without the loss of a dollar of principal or interest; and each year the examinations of these companies made by the Bank Commissioners of the Eastern States, whose savings-banks buy so largely of these loans, and which therefore insist upon these examinations, make this sole duty of the investor a comparatively simple and easy one. It is also one of the incidents of this system, growing out of the fact that all good companies keep constantly on hand a large assortment of loans of all sizes, that an investor can at once, and without any loss of time or interest, invest any sum, either large or small.

In regard to this system of investment, it has been truly said that human ingenuity has been exhausted in devising ways and means to conduct the business wisely and safely, and in throwing every possible safeguard about the investor, with the result of producing a class of securities which, whether considered on the score of their availability, their intrinsic worth, their great safety, or their sure and ample return of income, are **THE VERY PERFECTION OF INVESTMENTS.**

Those who have had the good fortune to obtain the better class of securities thus described, who have had their dealings only with honorable and reliable companies, who have thus been saved all trouble and anxiety and have at the same time received a good income at regular intervals, are they who speak so highly of Western mortgages and hold them in such great esteem.

But there is another side to this question. It is a matter of common experience that whenever any production has attained a high state of perfection, and has given general satisfaction, then numberless cheap imitations instantly spring up. How many manufacturers could tell of years of patient and intelligent labor in the development, we will say, of a particular fabric, only to find as soon as they had overcome all the difficulties, and produced an article which gave universal satisfaction, that the market was flooded with cheap and flimsy imitations! It has been so with Western mortgages. When, after years of slow and steady growth, the community awakened to the realization that here was a relief to those needing good and safe investments,—when, by wise, careful, and successful dealings long continued, the pioneer companies had gained the public confidence,—numberless individuals and companies, most of them without experience and ill equipped for the work, some of them intending fraud from the beginning, started spurious imitations. As the borrower and lender are so far separated, and as in the case of farm loans, especially, it is impossible for the Eastern investor to make a personal examination of the property loaned upon, infinite opportunities for fraud and accident are presented, and it will only be necessary to recall what has been before indicated as the requirements of a good mortgage, to see how easily bad ones may be substituted. Poor loans may result from a failure properly to prepare the papers or to examine the title and search for prior liens, and above all, for here is the greatest danger, from the omission to examine each particular property loaned upon, and

by means of competent and disinterested examiners to fix the value of the security. The fact is, that by reason of the incompetency, and, in many instances, the downright dishonesty, of some of the individuals and companies engaged in this business, investors have been woefully taken advantage of. This danger increased as the confidence of the community in this class of investments grew, and when weak and ill-conducted companies have failed to meet their guarantees and pay the interest due their patrons, the entire system has been condemned by those who were either unfriendly to it or ignorant of its benefits. Those who have investigated the matter for themselves, however, well know that the companies referred to have failed, not because of any inherent weakness in the system itself, but because of the reckless practices of the companies concerned, which were brought to light in the investigations which followed their default.

In spite of the name by which this system is designated, it should be understood that it is by no means necessarily confined to the West. In point of fact, in that favored section of our country the greatest opportunity was first found for the investment of large sums of money, and, commencing with Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, those engaged in this business have successively loaned to the inhabitants of these States, and by the liberal outlay of money have literally caused them to "blossom like the rose." The Mississippi and the Missouri, and finally the Rocky Mountains, have since been crossed, first by the hardy pioneer, and next by the judicious lender of money, until now this business has reached all the way to the Pacific coast, and especially in the new State of Washington, and about the waters of Puget Sound, among the bright and enterprising people who have forced their way to that distant and beautiful land, a most favored field of investment is now found.

The most careless observer could not fail to see the wonderful benefits that have been wrought by this system. Cities have grown up as if by magic, immense tracts of land have been improved, and to-day some of the most universally prosperous people to be found on any portion of the earth's surface are located in those States where this system has attained its greatest perfection. And in the future this system will continue to grow, and will extend its beneficent action to every part of our common country where it is not restrained by unwise laws or discouraged by an indolent and careless community. There are some States in the West where investing companies will not lend a dollar, because of the existence of laws which, originally intended for the benefit of the farmer, have been found to operate most seriously against him. If a community attempts to hedge itself by laws forbidding the payment of honest debts, those who have succeeded in obtaining money under circumstances which practically amount to false pretences may derive some temporary advantage, which, however, will be more than offset by the loss of credit which such loose practices necessarily produce. It is perhaps worthy of notice that in some of the States, but particularly in Nebraska, the wiser heads have realized the truth of what has just been said, and when an attempt was made to pass stay laws and other unwise pro-

visions, looking to the prevention of the collection of debts, these were frowned down. It was pointed out that the State could not afford to destroy its credit forever for the purpose of benefiting a few incompetent, lazy, or dishonest people, who were unwilling to meet their obligations, and the laws that were introduced in the Legislature the last session attempting to change the existing statutes on this subject, in relation to the collection of interest, etc., were defeated.

Some attempt has been made to extend the benefit of this system to the South. Virginia especially, with its new industrial life, has earnestly endeavored to divert some of this capital to its development, but as yet with little success, because of the old taint of repudiation, and possibly because of the recent attempts that have been made in South Carolina and Georgia to repudiate obligations of this kind, and to prevent their collection.

In conclusion, let us consider for a few moments some of the benefits which have accrued from this system, in addition to those that have been indicated in what has gone before. The very greatest benefit has been the wide and uniform circulation of capital. Money has often been compared to the blood. Both of them are great circulating mediums, carrying life with them wherever they go. If the circulation of the blood should be impeded, and certain portions of the body should become gorged with it, disease and death would result. Whatever tends to restore this circulation is therefore a great boon; and this is equally true of money in the body politic. A grave danger, which has threatened the country at many times in the past, is the great glut of this commodity in certain sections and the great lack of it in others. This has produced in the body politic evils corresponding to those that would result in the natural body from a similar condition of the blood; and whatever tends to restore the circulation of money, and to remove the engorged condition of one section and nourish the impoverished condition of others, is likewise a great boon. This is just the work that has been performed by this system of Western mortgages. Whereas in the West, within a very few years, one per cent. a month, and from that to three per cent., has been the customary rate of interest, now in some of the principal cities, such as Chicago, St. Paul, Omaha, and Kansas City, loans have been made on the best business real estate as low as five per cent., while the rate of interest in such cities as New York and Philadelphia, which had got down to three per cent., has gone back quite firmly to the same rate.

There is another benefit which should not be overlooked, and that is, that this steady flow of money has prevented usury. When there was infinitely more demand than there was supply, those needing money were compelled to pay any rate necessary to obtain what they wanted. Since, however, by means of these great companies, sufficient confidence has been created to enable the Eastern capitalist to lend to the Western borrower, the supply has equalled the demand, and the unfortunate borrower is no longer imposed upon. If he is honest, if he has a good security, he can get his money at reasonable rates.

This system may be applied with equally good results in the North, South, and East, as well as in the West, and the inference is irresist-

ible that, before many years have elapsed, its strong points will have been borrowed for use in every portion of our country, and when this is done, when in any and every section the borrower can obtain what he wants, at reasonable rates, and capitalists can find a speedy and safe means of disposing of their surplus, all sections of our country will be greatly benefited, and those who judge rightly will award much of the credit to this system of Western mortgages.

William McGeorge, Jr.

A HINT TO NOVELISTS.

I HAVE, I think, discovered a method by which any moderately well educated person may, without imagination, observation, knowledge of the world, or any of the other qualities which have hitherto been considered necessary for the task, be able to write a good novel.

As far as I know, my conception is perfectly new, but, being very simple, as great ideas proverbially are, it may, or, did I not caution the reader, might, be confounded with a very old and crude idea which has already been utilized abundantly. I shall show, however, as I proceed, wherein the idea I have discovered differs fundamentally from the old idea, to which it may seem to bear a superficial resemblance.

Briefly, then, my idea is that in fiction the higher class of artists should take a lesson from the lower class. Let me endeavor to explain what I mean by this. Historians I take to be would-be novelists who either have not got, or will not use, the constructive faculty. The historian wishes to tell a tale, just as the novelist does, but, not being able or willing to invent one for himself, he takes a string of incidents from past records, dresses these incidents up according to his own fancy, and, having thus made a new story out of them, publishes the result in a volume called a history. The great principle on which he works is to form a new conception of the characters in his story. And as characters and circumstances act and react on each other, the reader is interested in watching how the old incidents are modified by the new characters, until from these modifications there is evolved a new and sometimes a most unexpected and surprising tale. A familiar instance of this is Mr. Froude's story of Henry VIII.

Until Mr. Froude took the subject in hand it seemed impossible by any glozing of facts to bring Henry VIII. out as other than a sensual, blood-thirsty monster. But, by preconceiving his hero to be a most wise, virtuous, and liberal-minded prince, and by steadily adhering to this preconception all through his story, Mr. Froude has produced a work which is as novel as any that go by that name, and as interesting and surprising to boot. He has shown us, in short, how a number of, to all appearances, hopelessly incorrigible facts can be reformed by an ingenious theory so as to become, from a moral and artistic point of view, new facts.

Again, as an instance of how the conception we form of a man's character will affect our way of recounting the incidents of his life, let me take Mr. Carlyle's description of the flight of Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette from Paris. Having conceived Louis to have been a man of an indolent, careless, lethargic disposition, and his wife as being of somewhat the same nature, Carlyle tells how they travelled at a snail's pace when they ought to have been hurrying along with all speed. The interest of the narrative is intense. The reader feels inclined to shout to the king, who is calmly walking by the side of horses that ought to have been galloping as fast as their legs could carry them. There is in reading the story the sense of a nightmare in which we are hardly able to move while some dreadful thing is pursuing us. We identify ourselves with the royal fugitives and shudder at their dilatoriness and delays. No doubt as a statement of what actually did occur Mr. Carlyle's tale has been proved to be utterly incorrect. What I wish, however, to draw attention to is that it perfectly answers that which is the final cause of every book,—viz., to interest the reader. Of course people who are trying to escape death would not be likely to dawdle along at the rate of two or three miles an hour if they had the means of travelling more quickly. Of course not. Mr. Carlyle, however, represents this as being what his heroes did, and the great merit of his story is that it is told in such a way as to make the reader believe they did it. Thus a story which is commonplace when related by other people becomes one of thrilling interest when told by Mr. Carlyle, and serves as an excellent example of how a new story may be extracted from old incidents.

We see, then, how historians manage to interest their readers. Taking their materials from records of the past, they cast, so to speak, these materials in new theories, and thus bring them out in novel and, sometimes, perfectly unrecognizable forms,—one of the results being a good deal of innocent, perplexed amusement to those who take history *au sérieux*.

Now, why, I ask, cannot fictionists of the higher order do the same thing by drawing on the records of their predecessors? What most novelists are so much in want of is a supply of incidents. Why, I would say to them, not take the incidents, together with the localities, names, and relative positions of the characters, from some good novel the copyright of which has expired, and then rewrite the story, following the elder novelist through all his incidents, or as many of them as you conveniently can, but relating these incidents as they would have happened if your people, and not your predecessor's, had been moving about among them? In this way, while all the trouble of invention would be taken off your hands, you would be perfectly certain to produce a new story, and, as the quality of the incidents is guaranteed by experience, the story itself would probably be a good one. Such is my suggestion to novelists: that, instead of trying to invent a number of incidents so connected as to form a story (which, not to speak of the trouble it involves, is generally a task they are unequal to), they should leave the invention to their predecessors and simply retell the old stories as they would have to be retold if it were suddenly discovered that the

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characters of the persons in them were quite different from what the original author supposed. It may be thought that this is only plagiarism,—which is as old as the hills. It is as different, however, from plagiarism as anything can be. The plagiarist is a literary thief who pretends to invent when he is only remoulding, and one who by mixing the pure metal which he has stolen with the base stuff of his own manufacture ends, as a rule, in producing a worthless alloy.

People who wrote on my system would not pretend to invent at all. On the contrary, they would avowedly work on what has been invented already, merely introducing such alterations into the previously-invented story as would be necessary to suit the requirements of their newly-conceived characters.

To clothe my theory in circumstances, according to Lord Eldon's maxim, let me suppose that I were rewriting "*Vanity Fair*." Just as one historian follows another in the chronological order of their supposed facts, so I should follow Mr. Thackeray most faithfully in the order in which he takes the incidents of his wonderful story. I should, as far as possible, avoid introducing any new element of fact. That is to say, I should not represent my characters as leaving undone anything the old characters had done, or doing anything they had not done, unless I were compelled to do so by a due regard to how my people would be likely to conduct themselves if they were placed in the position of Mr. Thackeray's people—or "puppets," as he was wont to call them.

Thus, I might commence with something like the following estimate of some of the principal characters :

Mr. Osborne, senior,—a highly-cultured, philanthropic, generous, and liberal-minded merchant.

George Osborne, his son,—a high-spirited and generous young man, of a thoughtful and prudent disposition.

Old Sedley,—a Stock Exchange Welcher.

Rawdon Crawley,—an utterly unprincipled blackleg.

Dobbin,—a slouching, designing hypocrite. He is secretly in love with Amelia, who returns his affection. They carry on a clandestine flirtation up to the death of George Osborne.

Josh Sedley,—a man of a thoroughly sterling, clear-headed, and courageous character; altogether, a worthy type of an English magistrate.

Amelia Sedley,—an artful, underhand, intriguing little hussy. Her character is essentially spiteful, jealous, and frivolous.

Rebecca Sharp,—a clever, high-spirited girl, naturally vivacious and fond of fun; of an amiable, warm-hearted, and trustful disposition, but taught by the bitter experience of poverty to restrain the outward expression of her emotions.

Seen through this new conception of the characters that figure in Mr. Thackeray's story, the old incidents would, perforce, revive in such a way as of necessity to form a new and, as I cannot help thinking, a very interesting tale. I have not, of course, space to indicate all, or nearly all, the changes which the original story would sustain if it were to be retold from the above premises. Nor is it necessary that I should do so, these remarks being intended merely as suggestions addressed to a class of students who are peculiarly apt and prone to act on anything in the way of a suggestion. Still, I may note a few

salient features in which my history of *Vanity Fair* would differ from Mr. Thackeray's.

Thus, the characters of George Osborne, Josh Sedley, and Rebecca Sharp being as I have assumed above, it will, I think, clearly follow that both George and Josh fell in love with Rebecca, and that she rejected both of them, actuated by a high-minded sense of loyalty to Amelia in the case of George, and by a sense of what was due to her host and hostess, owing to her own humble position, in the case of Josh. A natural corollary is that George and Josh quarrelled about her, and this gives the clue to a new rendering of the scene at Vaux-hall.

Again, the characters of George Osborne and his father being as I have supposed, Mr. Thackeray's commonplace account of their quarrel becomes impossible, and a new and romantic reason of their estrangement is both suggested and rendered almost as probable as it is unexpected. Assuming them to be such men as I have indicated, it seems to follow logically that they quarrelled because *Mr. Osborne thought his son wanted to jilt Amelia*.

The misunderstanding between the high-minded parent and his equally high-minded offspring would appear to have come about in this way.

George had been engaged to Amelia when he was but a boy. In his more mature years he discerned the weakness of her character, and surrendered his affections to Rebecca. Amelia would have been glad to part with him, as she wanted to marry Dobbin. But Mr. Osborne, senior, was a client of her father's, and partly for that reason, partly on account of the wealth George would inherit, her father insisted on her keeping George to his engagement. Old Osborne was shocked at what he regarded as a breach of faith on the part of his son, and insisted on his marrying Amelia. George, being a dutiful young man, obeyed, but, unfortunately, not until his father, in a fit of passion at what he regarded as his perfidy, had disinherited him. As well-bred gentlemen, the father and son did not wish the real cause of their quarrel to be known. It would not do, of course, to let the world know that George was being forced to marry Amelia. Consequently, if it were only out of regard to her feelings, they assigned as the cause of their difference the commonplace explanation which has deceived Mr. Thackeray. It was owing to a chivalrous and delicate desire to give color to this false version of the matter, and thus to screen even from Amelia herself the true state of her husband's feelings when he married her, that Mr. Osborne abstained for some little time after George's death from recognizing his widow and her child. The dispute between Osborne and Sedley was due, of course, to some of Sedley's rascally Stock Exchange transactions, which had become so bad of late as to make it impossible for a respectable man like Osborne to continue the acquaintance. Dobbin's conduct in urging George to marry Amelia was worthy of Iago, and has completely deceived Mr. Thackeray. Dobbin did so because he thought that George would refuse, were it only through a spirit of mere opposition.

When Amelia heard of her husband's death she was secretly

pleased, as she thought she could marry Dobbin forthwith; but he made her wait until Mr. Osborne had executed the settlement which he knew to be inevitable if she continued unmarried.

For the convenience of Rebecca we have only to paint the character of Miss Crawley a shade or two darker than Mr. Thackeray has done, and the marriage of Captain Crawley and Miss Sharp will come out in a new light, and one that sheds a dramatic interest upon the whole subsequent history of that most gifted and engaging young lady.

Having got tired of Rawdon, Miss Crawley wanted an excuse for disowning him, so as to leave her money to Pitt. Accordingly, she encouraged Rebecca to marry Rawdon, and then, when they were married, pretended to disapprove of what had been brought about by her own instigation. In the hope of reforming her husband, poor Rebecca induced Lord Steyne, a most kind-hearted and virtuous nobleman, to get him an appointment in the Colonies. Of course, when he found himself safely provided for, Rawdon, like the cur he was, turned on his faithful wife and true friend.

In the end, Amelia would justly lead a wretched life, constantly buffeted by her brutal husband; whilst there would be something intensely pathetic in the virtuous, care-worn Rebecca, with a true woman's charity, nursing her old lover through his last illness.

If one were to rewrite "*Vanity Fair*" on some such lines as I have indicated, all the old incidents would, I think, undergo a process of natural transformation, and rearrange themselves a perfectly new and interesting story. A little "treatment," such as historians are used to adopt, might occasionally be necessary; but this would not ineffectually tax the skill of any ordinary writer.

Thus, to take for example the scene at the ball in Brussels. George Osborne asked Miss Crawley to dance, and Mr. Thackeray, who never seems to be so happy as when he is making mischief among his characters, represents this as though it were a slight on Amelia. Now, what on earth, I ask, did Mr. Thackeray expect George Osborne to do? Did he expect him to ask his own wife to dance at a ball? To my mind, the whole matter is as innocent and as clear as a pike-staff. Like the well-bred gentleman he was, George Osborne asked Rebecca to dance, whilst Amelia danced with Rawdon Crawley, or perhaps—nay, very likely—sat sulking because the odious Dobbin was too awkward and loutish even to think of presenting himself at the entertainment.

In a similar manner all the other incidents of the story, or nearly all of them, could be made to tally with any new conceptions we chose to form of the characters, and any wholly impracticable incidents, if there were such, could be glozed over or denied,—according to the custom of historians. However, as each person who adopts my suggestion will strike out a new path for himself, I need not go any further into details, nor indicate how, by applying a similar process, other celebrated novels might be made to yield a fresh crop of interest. The reader will, of course, observe that children's tales would be just as susceptible of such treatment as novels are. A new edition of the "*Fairchild Family*," for example, representing that estimable house-

hold as composed of agnostic radicals, and with substituted disquisitions on social science, Darwinism, and the theory of evolution, ought to give as much pleasure to the present rising generation as Mrs. Sherwood's excellent but now almost forgotten story did to its less enlightened predecessors.

In conclusion, I would wish to say strongly that fictionists proper ought not to find any more difficulty in whitewashing such characters as Becky Sharp and Lord Steyne than pseudo-fictionists have experienced in applying the same process to Henry VIII., Bloody Mary, and Tiberius, who has lately been made to conduct himself very properly,—at least for a king in history. Novels or children's tales which are written on these principles ought always, of course, to bear their original titles. Thus, as each succeeding attempt to tell the story of the English people is called History of England, whether the author be Hume or Macaulay or Froude or Freeman, so each attempt to tell the story of, for example, the Osbornes, Sedleys, and Crawleys ought to be called "Vanity Fair," whether the author be Thackeray (who first took the job in hand) or Brown or Jones or Robinson.

W. H. Stacpoole.

A DÉBUTANTE.

FROM very weariness

She slept, yet breathed, in dreams, the fragrance of Success,
Sweeter to her desires than cooling showers,
Than perfumes hived in flowers,
Or than those songs which, ere the night is done,
Break forth in rapturous worship of the sun.

The longed-for prize
Her own, again she heard delighted plaudits rise,
Again her conquest read in beaming eyes,
And scanned each upturned face, and missed—but one!

"O love," she dreaming sighed,
In joy grown sudden sad, and lonely in her pride,—

"O love, dost thou, of all the world, not care
These triumphs dear to share?
Dost thou, who sued in griefs to bear a part,
Who lightened discontent, and soothed with heavenly art,
And still forbore to blame,
Remove, when all besides with praises speak my name?"
Distinct, yet as from far, the answer came:
"Love still demands an undivided heart!"

Florence Earle Coates.

A DEAD MAN'S DIARY.

WRITTEN AFTER HIS DECEASE.

CHAPTER IV.

THE WRITER TAKES THE READER INTO HIS CONFIDENCE.

WHEN the first rough draft of this diary was lying on my study table, there called to see me, at a time when I chanced to be out, a certain novelist who is an old and intimate friend of mine. He was shown into the study to await my coming, and, on my return, I found him amusing himself with these papers. Of the reality of my death-experiences (which he persistently refused to regard as other than dreams) I had never been able to convince him, and I was not surprised therefore when, after the conversation turned upon the work each of us had in hand, he referred to my booklet in his usual sceptical tone.

"My dear fellow," he said, laying one hand upon the offending manuscript, "I haven't the slightest intention of disputing the truth of your statements, or of denying that your diary has a certain unwholesome interest of its own, but seriously, I don't think fiction is altogether in your line."

"Nor satire in yours," I replied; "but what have you to say against the thing now?"

"This," he answered, more evidently in earnest; "that you haven't scored as you might have done, but have let slip what opportunities you had for turning out something original. 'Letters from Hell' (which, by the bye, you must expect to be charged with imitating, though *that* needn't trouble you much), was confessedly a work of pure imagination, and I shouldn't be surprised if the fact helped somewhat to lessen the interest of the volume. Now your book has just enough shadow of probability or possibility to sustain the delusion, and all that will tell in its favour. The public likes—just as Dick Swiveller's Marchioness did—to 'make believe' in the reality of that which is meant to interest it; and books or plays can't be too life-like or realistic nowadays. You have 'made believe' until you have brought yourself to believe in the reality of something which I can't think ever happened, but that isn't my business. What I complain of is this:—that although you have a story to tell with sufficient shadow of probability or possibility, as I have said, to make it interesting, and to keep up the delusion, you have failed most lamentably to turn your opportunities to account. Take your death

scene, for instance. Any practical writer of ordinary ability could *imagine* the sensations of dying, and could draw a far more powerful picture of them than you have done, who profess to have actually experienced those sensations personally. Then what you have to say about Heaven and Hell, and all the rest of it, is curious, and some may think it not uninteresting, but you haven't given us any idea of what the places are like after all. Why didn't you draw on your imagination, man? Why didn't you go in for the grim, and grey, and ghastly? Why didn't you revel in the weird (never mind Mr. Lang's abuse of the word), or conjure up blissful dreams of the blest and of Paradise? I know a dozen men who could have made twice as much capital, and far more saleable copy, out of that idea of yours about a man dying, or nearly so, and then coming back to relate what he has seen, as it appears from the standpoint of frail mortality; and I tell you frankly that I don't think you have scored as you ought to have done."

"But what has all this," says the reader, "to do with your diary? We are willing to hear what you have to tell about your experiences, but we didn't bargain for an article setting forth the opinion of your friends on the subject, and we can't help thinking that the introduction of this chapter is somewhat uncalled for."

Well, perhaps it is so, but it is because the conversation given above touches upon some points concerning which I am anxious that the reader should come to a right understanding before he enters upon my after-death experience, that I have inserted it here, and if a very few minutes' indulgence be granted me, I will say what I have to say as briefly as possible. I could, I am sure, by drawing a little on my imagination, have written a far more striking description of the sensations of death, than that which I have given in the preceding chapter, for of such description, in the sense of "working-up a situation," there is absolutely none. All that I have tried to do is to relate my story with a resolute avoidance of anything akin to the sensational. If aught of the sensational there be in the narrative, it is because the thing is sensational in itself, and not because I have attempted to make it so. As George Eliot says, it is far easier to draw a griffin, with wings and claws filled in according to our own fancy, than to correctly limn the outlines of a lion; and to keep to the truth has been the hardest part of my task.

When the mental picture or impression left on my mind is but an imperfect one, I have not attempted as I might easily, and perhaps pardonably have done, to fill in the missing outline from my imagination, but have given the picture or impression for what it is worth, and have left it so. My memory is, generally speaking, an excellent one, and during the first few hours of consciousness after the return of vitality, the recollection of that which I had seen was as fresh as are the events of yesterday. Within a week, however, I found that the greater part of it had gone from me, and that all my efforts to recall the mental pictures were unavailing. I have sometimes wondered if it can be possible that when my presence was missed from the realms into which I had so untimely wandered, some angelic

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messenger was despatched with instructions to wipe out from the tablets of my memory the records of my experiences. Whether it be so, or not, I cannot say, but this I do know, that had I commenced my diary within a week of my return to life, the booklet would have been one such as it is not often given to man to write. The subject however seemed then, and for a long time after, too solemn to be turned to account for "copy," and each of the several years which have elapsed since I died, has taken with it some part of the recollections that remained to me, and now that I have all too tardily set about my task, I have but blurred and broken reminiscences to offer in place of a life-like picture.

These reminiscences, vague, disconnected, and fragmentary as they are, I have given for what they are worth. If any reader think that I have overrated the value of my experiences, and that I have failed to verify the promise with which I started, I can only assure him that the failure is due, not to the insufficiency of what is strange and striking in my experiences, but to my inability to recall what I have seen, and to my incompetency to do fitting justice to my singular subject.

CHAPTER V.

TELLS OF MY FIRST AWFUL AWAKENING IN HELL AND OF THE SHAMEFUL SIN WHICH BROUGHT ME THITHER.

The expense of spirit in a waste of shame
Is lust in action ; and till action, lust
Is perjured, murderous, bloody, full of blame,
Savage, extreme, rude, cruel, not to trust ;
Enjoyed no sooner but despised straight ;
Past reason hunted, and no sooner had,
Past reason hated, as a swallow'd bait,
On purpose laid to make the taker mad ;
Mad in pursuit, and in possession so ;
Had, having, and in quest to have, extreme ;
A bliss in proof, and, proved, a very woe ;
Before, a joy proposed ; behind a dream ;
All this the world well knows ; yet none knows well
To shun the heaven that leads men to this hell.

Shakespeare's 129th Sonnet.

TIME, which is our name for the petty portion of Eternity which we of the human race experience, has no existence in that Eternity which has been defined as the "lifetime of the Almighty;" and so it was that though I remained in the spirit realm but two days, it seemed to me as if weeks, months, years, had elapsed between my death, and the hour when I first became conscious of that death.

I have told you that as I lay a-dying, I felt my life slowly but steadily ebbing away, until at last there came a time—the moment of death, I believe it to have been—when the outward and deathward-setting tide seemed to reach its climax, and when upon the inward-setting flood of that fuller existence into which I had died, I felt myself swept shoreward and lifeward again. I know that there are some who will say that the turning point which I have called the moment of death, was nothing more or less than the moment which marked the decline of the disease, and the return of vitality, but this theory, plausible and even probable, as it seems, leaves the strangest part of my experience unexplained, and I cannot entertain it; neither, I think, will the reader, when he has heard me out.

Whether my death was succeeded by a season of slumber, in which certain appointed and divinely-ordered dreams were caused to be dreamed by me, or whether God caused the hands on the dial of Time to be put back for a space in order that I might see the past as I see it, I neither knew nor know, but I distinctly remember that the first thing of which I was conscious after my dissolution was that the events of my past life were rising before me. Yes, it was my past life, which I saw in that awful moment, my past life standing out in its own naked and intolerable horror, an abomination in the sight of God, and of my own conscience.

The hands on the dial of Time went back half a score, a score, and finally a score and a half of years, and once more I was a young man of twenty-one. The chambers in which I was then living were situated in one of the well-known Inns off Holborn, and the housekeeper of the wing where I was quartered was a widow, who, with her daughter Dorothy, a girl of seventeen, resided on the premises.

As it was Dorothy's part to wait upon the occupants of the chambers, she had occasion to come to my room several times in the day, and I could not help noticing her loveliness, which, indeed, reminded me strangely of my favourite *Greuze* picture. When I first knew her she seemed maidenly and modest, but was vain beyond a question, and her manner to those of the opposite sex who happened to be young and good-looking, was shy and self-conscious, with occasional dashes of an artless and even childish coquetry which was most bewitching. By this girl I was irresistibly and fatally fascinated. I was young, susceptible, and singularly impressionable to female beauty, whilst the loneliness and the monotony of the life I was leading were in themselves elements of considerable danger. To make matters worse, it was only too evident that Dorothy was not indifferent to my admiration, for she took every opportunity to place herself in my way. Knowing as I did that it was but the fascination of form and feature which attracted me, and that nothing but mischief was likely to come of such a passion, I strove my hardest to steel myself against her, but Fate seemed adverse.

One summer evening while I was sitting in my study, waiting for a friend, there burst over London the most fearful thunderstorm which I have ever witnessed. The lightning was so vivid and the thunder so terrific, that even I, who am by no means nervous about such

things, felt strangely moved and unsettled; and I was not a little glad, therefore, to hear what I took to be my friend's knock. When I went to the door, however, I found that it was not he, but Dorothy, and that she was white with fear, and trembling from head to foot. "Oh, sir," she sobbed, "mother's out, and there's no one else in but you, and I'm so frightened that I can't stay by myself. If you'll only let me be here till she returns, I'll be very quiet and not disturb your writing."

Knowing my weakness, and her great beauty, I had up to that moment studiously refrained from allowing as much as a wandering glance to rest on her, but I could not avoid looking at her now, and I remember that her eyes, bright and pitiful and beseeching, "her bosom's gentle neighbourhood," and the very consciousness of her presence as she stood before me, set my heart beating so wildly, that it was all I could do to refrain from taking her in my arms then and there, and telling her (forgive the profanation of a holy word) that I "loved" her.

The virtuous determination to be on our guard against some besetting sin or constitutional failing comes to us generally, *not* during the moment of temptation, when we are most in need of such a moral reminder, but *after* the event, and when the determination is too late; but on this occasion I heard the inward monitor speak out a timely warning and that with no uncertain tongue. By a great effort I nerved myself to my accustomed control, and though I knew Dorothy would think me churlish and cruel, I told her coldly that she had better go downstairs and wait the return of her mother. The words had scarcely time to pass my lips (I doubt, indeed, if she could have heard them), before they were lost in a terrific thunder-peal, following almost instantaneously upon a blinding flash of lightning—a flash that blazed forth hot and red like belchings from the throat of hell, blighting and blasting our lives with its fatal fire. It had been better for both of us, as I have often since thought, if that flash had struck us dead as we stood there; for with one cry of passion and fear, and calling me by my name—my christian name—in a tone that none could misinterpret, Dorothy flung her arms around me, and the next moment I found myself pressing her to my heart with a fierce and almost savage exultation, and telling her amid a score of burning kisses that I loved her.

Almost immediately afterwards we heard the opening of doors which indicated her mother's home-coming, but not before Dorothy had time to tell me in return that she too loved me, and had always done so. And then she slipped from my arms, and tripped away with tumbled hair and flaming cheeks to join her mother, turning as she reached the door to look back with a shy smile and to say—innocently and unsuspectingly enough as I knew well—that the room directly over mine was her own, and that she often lay awake at night listening to my restless pacing to and fro, and wondering what could keep me up so late.

Of the hellish thought which rose in my heart as I listened—the thought that she would not refuse me admittance to her room should I

seek her there that night—she could have had no suspicion, for it was a thought of which, at any other time, I should have deemed myself incapable. I remember that I did not fling the hateful suggestion from me, as I should have done an hour earlier, although, passion-maddened as I was, I recoiled from it, and vowed that I would never entertain it. But I brooded over the horrible idea, and sketched out how easily it might be acted upon, were I the foul thing to do it, which I still declared to myself I was not. Had I arisen in trembling horror, and thrust the vile conception from me, as I would have thrust a poisonous reptile, she and I might even then have been saved, but I let it enter and take up its abode in my heart, and from thenceforward I strove to drive it forth in vain.

Oh! in God's name, in the name of Love and Truth and Purity, when any such evil or impure thought as much as casts the shadow of its approaching presence on your soul, then in all the strength of your manhood and your honour, arise and thrust it out, ere it be too late! Argue not, delay not, listen not, but hurl the loathsome whisper from you as though it were some poisonous serpent, and bid it be gone for ever!

From the moment that I gave audience to that messenger of Satan, hell and its furies laid hold on me. Sometimes I seemed to be gaining ground, sometimes I seemed to be recovering my balance of mind. "*I will do the right!*" I cried, "*I will not be guilty of this accursed thing!*" but even as I strove to fix my feeble purpose to the sticking point, some moral screw seemed to give way within me, and I felt that purpose ebbing away like life-blood from a fatal wound.

At last the struggle seemed to cease, and there was borne in upon me a sense of peace, deep, and sweet, and restful. I know now that it was but exhaustion consequent upon the strain I had endured, that it was nothing more than the inevitable re-action from the high soul-tension to which I had been subjected. To me, however, it seemed as the very peace of God and as a sign from heaven, and lulled into a false security, I let my thoughts wander back to dwell again upon the temptation. Need I tell the remainder of my story? Need I say that my passion had but simulated defeat, as passion often does, in order that it might turn in an unguarded moment, and rend me with redoubled fury? The next moment I saw my last gasping effort to will what was right and true sink amid the tempestuous sea of sinful wishes, as a drowning man sinks after he has risen for the third time; and deliberately thrusting away, in the very doggedness of despair, the invisible hand which yet strove to stay me, I arose and sought the room that I had prayed I might never enter.

* * * * *

You may wonder perhaps how it is that I am able to recall so vividly the circumstances of an event which happened many years ago. You would cease so to wonder had you seen, as I have seen, the ghost of your dead self rise up to cry for vengeance against you, and to condemn you before the judgment seat of God, and of your own

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conscience. For this was my first glimpse of Hell; this was my Day of Judgment. The recording angel of my own indestructible and now God-awakened memory showed me my past life as God saw it, and as it appeared when robbed of the loathsome disguises with which I had so long contrived to hide my own moral nakedness. "Sin looks much more terrible to those who look at it, than to those who do it," says the author of the "Story of an African Farm." "A convict, or a man who drinks, seems something so far off and horrible when we see him, but to himself he seems quite near to us, and like us. We wonder what kind of a creature he is, but he is just we ourselves." It was so indeed that I had thought and wondered. I had read often of "adulterers" and "murderers" in the newspapers, and had thought of them as I thought of lepers or of cannibals, in no way imagining that my youthful escapade could render such words applicable to me. I had accustomed myself to calling my crime "gallantry" in my own thoughts, and I should have regarded one who used harsher language as wanting in delicacy and in breeding; and now I found myself branded as "Murderer" and "Seducer" to all Eternity!

"Murderer!" you say. Yes, murderer, for seduction is moral murder; and the man who has thus sinned against a woman is fit only to stand side by side with him who has taken a life. Ay, and his is not seldom the more awful punishment, for God will as surely require the spiritual life at the hands of the seducer, as he will the bodily life at the hands of the murderer.

The one thing of all others which added to the unutterable horror of that moment, was the memory of the false and lying excuses with which I had striven to palliate my sin to myself. I remember that such excuses took form and shape, and haunted and tortured me like devils—as indeed they were—of my own begetting. "The relation of the sexes," I had often said when striving to silence an uneasy conscience, "Bah! it is but a yoke of man's imposing. I take the woman I love to live with me, and she and I are shunned as lepers. Yonder is a man who follows the same precedent and from the same motive, and because a priest has murmured a few words of sanction over the contract, he and his partner are fêted and flattered. How can the indulgence of a natural passion which in one set of circumstances is fair and honourable, in another be foul and sinful? Fair is fair, and foul is foul, and no muttering of a man can transform the one into the other."

This is the way in which I had repeatedly striven to silence my conscience, and it is but one instance of the way in which many others on this earth are now striving to silence theirs. "For God's sake," I would say to them, "beware!" Such hardening of the heart against the Holy Spirit, such God-murdering (for it is the wish to kill God, and to silence his voice for ever) is the one unpardonable sin which is a thousandfold more awful in its consequences than is the crime which it seeks to conceal. It was the foulest stain on the soul of him who hung by the dying Saviour, and

it is I believe at this moment the one and only thing which still keeps Hell Hell, and Satan Satan.

Must I write further of the torture-throes of that awful moment, when I first saw my sin in its true light? God only knows how even now I shudder and shrink at the mere thought of it, but I have told you of my crime, and it is right that I should speak also of my punishment. I remember that when the realization of what I was, and what I had done, was first borne in upon me, I fell to the ground and writhed in convulsive agony. The tortures of a material hell,—of a thousand material hells,—I would have endured with joyfulness could such torture have drowned for one moment the thought-agony that tore me. Nay, mere physical suffering—physical suffering meted out to me as punishment, and in which, though it were powerless to expiate, I could at least participate by enduring—I would have welcomed with delirious gladness, but of such relief or diversion of thought there was none. From the mere mention of annihilation—the personal annihilation of soul and body, of thought and sensation—I had ever shrunk with abject loathing and dread; but to annihilation, had such been then within my reach, I would have fought my way through a thousand devils. But in hell there is no escape through annihilation; suicide, the last refuge of tyrannous and cowardly despair, is of none avail,

“And death once dead there’s no more dying then.”

What had to be endured I found *must* be endured, and that unto the uttermost, for in all horrid hell there was no nook or cranny, into which I could creep to hide myself from the hideous spectres of the past. I remember that I rose up in my despair, and stretching vain hands to the impotent heavens, shrieked out as only one can shriek who is torn by hell-torture, and despair. I fell to the ground and writhed and foamed in convulsive and bloody agony. But not thus could I rid myself of the sights of hell, nor could mere physical pain wipe out from my brain the picture of the ruin I had wrought.

And then—but no, I am sick, I am ill, I am fainting, I cannot, I cannot write more.

(To be continued.)

PROOFS.

“Is there a Heaven?” I wondered. Then we met;—

There was no need to say the words again.

“A Hell?” Ah! love, I learned, nor may forget,

Beside thy grave its fierce eternal pain.

H. D. Lowry.

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WHO ARE CHRISTIAN MINISTERS?

THE Idea of the Christian Ministry is the key to the solution of the problem of Christian Unity; and is not without a decisive bearing on the still more momentous question of the efficiency of Christian Churches in establishing and extending the "Kingdom of God," i.e., the rule of righteousness, truth, and joy, within and over the whole life of man. Were it merely a technicality of ecclesiastical rank and prestige of individuals or of religious organizations we ought to pass it by for higher and more urgent themes. But it has the closest relations to the everyday life of men, to the measure, direction, and use of the spiritual forces that away their lives, and to the applications of the Christianity of Christ Jesus to the amelioration of the social condition of the world. And, therefore, it is destined to play a large part in that next and greatest readjustment of the *form* of Christian Societies to the new circumstances of our life, which in the judgment of most observers is now looming on the blurred horizon of the future.

The Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol, Dr. Ellicott, says in a recent address to the clergy and laity of his diocese in reference to an effort to promote Christian Union, "*The question of Orders was the chasm over which we could cast no bridge.*" And so, I sincerely believe it will be found in every real and practical discussion of the subject, until the time when, it may be, God may so far draw the sides of the chasm together that the bridge may at last be made." In a conciliatory discussion of the subject the Rev. Professor Lias speaks of "the doubt that is at present supposed to be fatal to the orders" of the clergy of the Scandinavian Church. A recently issued Eirenicon* regards Episcopal ordination as necessary to ministerial standing and the "valid" administration of the "Sacraments of the Churches." Even the proposals of the Lambeth Conference of Bishops required the recognition of the "Historic Episcopate" as one of the bases of approach towards "Home Reunion." Indeed, most Episcopalians, it is to be feared, hold and teach that it is an usurpation to discharge the duties of a Christian pastor without the warrant of Episcopal ordination, be the pastor as inspired and gifted as Paul, as spiritual and ardent as John, and as aggressive and successful as Peter. Spiritual powers, intellectual endowments, and the conviction of the call of the Holy Ghost, are all secondary to valid ordination.†

* Church or Chapel. An Eirenicon. By Joseph Hammond, LL.B., B.A., Vicar of St. Austell.

† Cf. Gore. *The Church and the Ministry*. "This book maintains that Christianity is essentially the law of an actual visible Society, and that at least one necessary link of connection in this society is the Apostolic Succession of the ministry It claims on behalf of apostolic succession that it must be reckoned with us as a permanent and essential element of Christianity." Pref. v.

But cheering and prophetic changes are in sight. Dr. Perowne, the Dean of Peterborough, in a paper* enriched not less with sweet reasonableness and Christian justice than with learning and ability, says of the Presbyterian, Wesleyan, Congregational and Baptist Churches: "I dare not for one moment accept the position that these churches are not churches at all, that their ministers are not lawful ministers, and their sacraments are not valid sacraments." And more recently Dr. Donald, speaking for himself and Dr. Phillipp Brooks at the installation of the successors of Henry Ward Beecher, said he greeted Dr. Abbot and Mr. Bliss "as Ministers of the Lord Jesus Christ in every respect spiritually competent to preach the Word of God, and to administer the two sacraments which belong to the Church."

But valuable as are such individual acts and judgments, the most significant circumstance is the new light being cast on the origins and early forms of the Christian Ministry by the rigorous application of historical science to the facts of early Church History in a historical temper.† There has been an enormous massing of historical material during the last twenty years; and a precise and thorough investigation has been given to that material by such competent scholars as Lightfoot and Hatch, Zahn and Harnack; tending partly, to fill up "the chasm" that separates the Churches with the debris of ecclesiastical theories; and still more, to bring the sides of the chasm so close together that our successors will have no need for Dr. Ellicott's bridge, but will be able to grasp hands in the clearer light that reveals the truth of a great historical situation in its ruling motive, total movement, and true perspective. Harnack says, "The knowledge of to-day is richer in historical points of view," and on few subjects is this more manifest than concerning the character and conditions of the ministry for teaching and for administration of the first Christian communities.

No doubt we must not anticipate immediate extensive changes. "Nothing is so mournful," says George Meredith, "as the way in which a theory will hold the wise;" but false theories are at last eaten through and destroyed by the acid of historical scientific enquiry. "*Lux Mundi*" is a witness in point. The Essay by the Editor, the Rev. C. Gore, M.A., Principal of Pusey House, offers such surprising evidence of capitulation to modern criticism in reference to the integrity and authority of Catholic tradition, to the Old Testament and Inspiration, that we may justly expect important changes in the next edition of his "*Church and the Ministry*."

It is admitted that the earliest datum in church organization is the distinction between the preaching of the gospel and the care of the needy.‡ That cleavage certainly remains for a considerable period. It appears in the "Apostles, prophets and teachers" of the *Corinthians* and the *Didaché*, who are not restricted to any locality but minister freely amongst the churches, whilst presbyters, bishops, and deacons

* Lippincott's Mag., Jan. 1890, p. 153.

† Hatch, *Bampton Lectures*, p. 2.

‡ Harnack, *Expositor*, May, 1877, p. 324.

are responsible for the care of the poor, the direction of discipline, the organization of hospitality, keeping the church rolls, and the material accessories of worship; although at a later date, those of the latter who are able, discharge the duties of apostles, prophets, and teachers.*

It is hazardous to say what will be the final finding of the scholarship of this age, but there is certainly a strong set in the currents of evidence towards the conclusion, that for the first half century of the history of the Churches, "there was (1) liberty of prophesying," as in the Church at Corinth (I. Corinthians, c. xiv.); (2) that apostles, prophets, and teachers visited the churches to preach, teach, and exhort, and that (3) officers were selected, as superintendents for the general arrangement of the services and for the management of congregational affairs. Sermons, if we may apply the word to the speaking in the assemblies of that date, were in the rudimentary stage of short prayer-meeting talks given by men of spiritual exaltation, rapt feeling and rich Christian ideas; whilst what we should speak of as the *ruling* of the Church was under the direction of a committee of "Deacons" and a chief or chiefs who were called "presbyters" in communities dominantly Jewish, and "overseers" or "bishops" in those distinctively Gentile. Episcopacy as we see it now, diocesan or monarchical, has no place in the first century of the church's existence; is not embraced amongst the early ideals of the Kingdom of God, but appears at length as one of the expedients of a later age, introduced by Church leaders just as a commander of an army adjusts his forces to the changing conditions of the field. The real successors to these first century societies, if conformity to their ministry be taken as the test, are not the Roman Catholic organizations around us, nor yet the Anglican, nor even the Presbyterian or Congregational, but the *Friends*, whose ministers are still regarded as "prophets," and are not fixed to one locality, but visit the various "meetings," wherein all may teach and exhort, who are moved by the Spirit of God; whilst the administration of discipline and worship and charity is left to each Society under the direction of a president and committee.

That spiritual conception of the Christian Ministry reigns amongst the non-sacerdotal, and non-episcopal Christian communions. Our ideal is in the New Testament and in the writings referring to the Christian organizations of the first century. No doubt in the apostolic age "the conditions of things were fluid." But it is undeniable that "the dispensation of the Spirit" was characteristically one of

* Cf. Dr. Sanday. *Expositor*, Feb., 1887, p. 109. Romans, xvi., 7, is sufficient evidence that the word *apostle* is not restricted to the twelve. The *Didaché* uses both *apostle* and *prophet* in a wider sense, and speaks of bishops and deacons as still occupying a secondary place as compared with prophets and teachers." "Appoint, therefore, for yourselves, bishops and deacons worthy of the Lord, men that are meek and not covetous, and truthful and approved; for they too perform for you the service of the prophets and teachers. Therefore, neglect them not: for they are your honoured ones together with the prophets and teachers." *Didaché*, C. XV.

freedom, of spirituality, and of glowing devotion in the ministration of the Word of God to men.

Liberty was the divine mark of the new era. The marvellous influx of spiritual power would not brook restraint. It demanded unopposed utterance. "Men were moved by the Holy Ghost," and they spake with boldness and much assurance. Spiritual qualifications were supreme and all-inclusive. Whoever could teach or preach might and ought. Signal spiritual and intellectual abilities, associated with a conviction of duty to Christ, the One Master, were the sole qualifications for ministerial service. Caste was not known. One "order" reigned; the order of regenerate souls; and all were in it, and were bound to teach, exhort, and preach as they had ability. "Apostles" were men who could testify to the facts and ideas of Christianity and to their experience of the power and grace of a living Saviour; and in essence and elements these were the prerogatives of every Christian. "Prophets" were men gifted with a genius for spiritual ideas and susceptible of quick and full response to the movements of the Spirit of God, the Spirit that wrought in all: and the "Teachers" were those who were endowed with capacity for expression as well as insight, and so could become the guides and helpers of others.

Ability, conviction, and recognition are and were the three, and the only three qualifications for the discharge of the highest ministry of the Churches of Jesus Christ. Whoever has the power of ministering the "mysteries of God" to men, and uses that power in single-hearted obedience to the call of God to serve his generation by that agency, and so secures the confidence of his Christian brethren, needs nothing more to make his ministry "valid," and can receive nothing more excepting the all-fructifying blessing of God.

But what is this *power* for ministry? May it not involve the conveyance of the grace of "valid ordination" by the "potentate-bishop," who claims to have received his gifts in unbroken succession from the Apostles?

Two brief answers to that question may be given. First the claim to apostolicity is discredited and gone beyond all recovery. The monarchical constitution of the Church cannot be traced back to the Apostles. Up to 140 A.D. there was no monarchical episcopate. Ignatius knows nothing of any bishop save the one who has charge of a local congregation,* and never considers bishops as successors of the Apostles.†

Add to this, a brief statement of what is required in a Christian minister. Before all things he must be a man, "a *man* of God." Not an elegant plausibility or make-believe, not a reciter or performer; but a living mass of genuine manhood, averse to cant and

* Cf. Harnack, *Expos.*, Jan., 1886, p. 16.

† "No one ought to acknowledge the genuineness of the third Epistle of John, with its unmeasured railing at the man who loves the primacy, and hold that the monarchical episcopate was of apostolic authority." Dr. Sanday, *Expos.*, April, 1887 p. 227.

insincerity, hardness and externalism, the destructive parasites that infest all religion. If spiritual genuineness is the first sign of a divine call, spiritual depth is the second, spiritual heat the third, and spiritual ideas the fourth. Spiritual exaltation was and is the distinctive mark of the prophet-teacher. He is the survival of the afflatus of Pentecost. A capacity to infuse religious ardour into the souls of others, to convert spiritual life into spiritual heat, to create sober, clear-sighted religious passion is an infallible "ordination" to the work of saving and guiding men. He who can attach his soul's belief to the souls of others, and make the Christ who is the power of his life the power of theirs, fusing their indifference and giving a moral impact to the flaccid will, is as surely put in trust with the gospel as was Paul or Peter and may as consciously work in the lines of the divine purposes as Moses or Matthew. Let him add to this a genius for spiritual ideas and for interpreting the spiritual life in the terms of Christ's Christianity, and the Churches will recognize his gifts and he will serve his generation through the ministration of the gospel according to the will of God. So the Christian ministry is discovered in its deep humanness and true divinity. It is a divine vocation, not an "order" rendered exclusive by artificial and external barriers, by imaginary "chains of continuity," the creation of an ecclesiastical caste, but a service,—a service in obedience to the Divine Voice, a service that has to do with what is deepest, most inward and regal in man, with faith and conscience, with aspiration and duty, with the forces that feed the spiritual life, with themes that fill time and run into eternity. Like all true service of man it is charged with the promise and potency of the future, but surpasses all as the true interpreter of the seen and unseen universe, as the messenger of forgiveness, the helper in righteousness, and the herald of immortal life.

Thus as Renan reminds us, the question of the ministry is really the great question. What is the essential element in the Church? Is it the clergy? Or is it the regenerated and inspired soul? Catholicism makes the "clergy" everything, and therefore treats apostolical succession as vital and fundamental to the ministry; and all theories of a "sacred order" gravitate towards the same conclusion. Nor is that all. The question is deeper still. It is a question of the real nature of religion. Is it spiritual and inward; a life of love and service of God and men, or is it external, mechanical, and sacramental? The conception of religion shapes and moulds the idea of the ministry. We go back therefore to the broad and simple teaching of Jesus concerning Religion, Society, and Service, and hear him tell us that life is only lived according to God's ideal of it, when every man is free to make, and does make, the fullest and finest use of every "talent" he has for the service of his fellows.

John Clifford.

LOVE.

As of old the wildered dove,
Wandering over waters dark,
Finding neither fount nor grove,
Sought shelter in her home, the ark,

So, my little one, my love,
Turns my restless heart to thee,
Weary whereso'er she rove
O'er the inhospitable sea.

Time hath linked us heart to heart
With links of mutual memory,
Of gentle power, if aught would part,
To bind us close until we die.

If the world arise to sever,
Steals a tiny spirit hand,
Glides to reunite us ever
From the holy silent land.

Find the birthplace of sweet Love ;
All our fairest gifts may go,
Yet will He immortal prove,
Fairest of all gods we know !

Find his nest within the grove
Of mystic manifold delight ;
Though all the summer leaves remove,
He will abide through winter's night ;
Unsearchable the ways of Love !
Though all the singing choir be gone,
Love Himself will linger on.

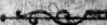
Discover hidden paths of Love ;
Explain the common miracle !
Dear abundant treasure-trove,
Celestial springs in earthly well,
In human vase Heaven's ænomet !

Roden Noel.



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